URBAN DESIGN—HEIGHT, BULK AND SCALE

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

This section summarizes the height, bulk and scale impacts of the EIS alternatives. The affected environment discussion describes current Downtown zones and development patterns, as well as City policies and zoning regulations pertinent to height, bulk and scale issues.

Background on Downtown Zones and Development Patterns

The existing height, bulk and scale characteristics of development in the Downtown zones have emerged over the course of Downtown's development history as each new generation of buildings responded to changing functional and economic demands, development regulations, building technologies, and architectural design. To address height, bulk and scale issues associated with new development, Downtown policies promote a development pattern that balances retention of existing character with the need to accommodate additional growth and a higher density of development. This balance varies within Downtown in response to the special conditions and development objectives of different areas.

Height limits and density limits are the principal regulations that affect height, bulk and scale. The general concept guiding the application of these limits calls for containing the most intensive (tallest and bulkiest) development in an office core area that roughly extends from Yesler Way to Lenora Street between I-5 and Second Avenue, omitting the retail core. Permitted height and density generally tapers down along the edges of this core area, and the downward tapering continues outward to the perimeter of Downtown to provide a transition with the lower scale of development in the waterfront and neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown.

The following summarizes height, bulk and scale characteristics of these areas. See Appendix I for additional information about current characteristics and past development patterns.

Downtown Office Core 1 (DOC 1) Zone

The DOC 1 zone accommodates the greatest concentration of office use and highest employment density within Downtown and the region, while encouraging other uses to add diversity and extend activity beyond the workday. The DOC 1 zone currently has a maximum height limit of 450 feet and a maximum density limit of 14 FAR—allowing the tallest and most dense development within Downtown. Additional height, up to 20% above the 450-foot limit (to 540 feet), may be allowed for projects that meet special development standards. The height and density limits in DOC 1 reinforce a development pattern that concentrates the greatest mass of buildings in a corridor served by I-5 and the transit tunnel. The characteristic scale of development in the area has already been established by numerous large projects; many of these are built on full-block sites created by past alley vacations. While the first generation of skyscrapers Downtown, such as the Smith Tower, Hoge Building and Alaska Building, occurred just beyond the southern edge of DOC 1, the zone has since accommodated the greatest share of Downtown high-rise commercial development.

Downtown Office Core 2 (DOC 2) Zone

The DOC 2 zone is intended to accommodate the expansion of concentrated office development from DOC 1 into adjacent areas, while providing a transition in density between DOC 1 and less-intensive mixed-use areas. The DOC 2 zone is primarily for commercial office uses with a mix of other activities

encouraged to add diversity, particularly beyond the hours of the workday. By accommodating a relatively high density of office use, this zone helps to reduce pressure for major office development in the retail core and adjacent mixed-use and residential areas, while also providing a transition in scale and density between adjacent areas and the denser development of the DOC 1 zone.

The DOC 2 zone currently has two height districts: a maximum height limit of 300 feet north of the commercial core, primarily in the Denny Triangle and a small portion of Belltown, and a 240-foot height limit at the southern edge of the commercial core near Pioneer Square. Under special provisions, development is allowed to exceed these height limits by an additional 10%, and in a more limited area, 20%. The zone has a maximum density limit of 10 FAR for commercial uses. In the Denny Triangle, mixed-use and residential development can exceed the 300-foot height limit up to 30% (390 feet) through participation in the transfer of development credits (TDC) program.

DOC 2 300' zone (Denny Triangle). Much of the DOC 2 300' zone in the Denny Triangle is underdeveloped relative to what the zoning allows. A substantial area is occupied by surface parking lots, automobile dealership lots, and transportation facilities such as the Greyhound Bus Terminal and Convention Place Transit Station. These uses are at a scale of development essentially equivalent to vacant parcels. Other small-scale structures, including walk-up apartment buildings, lowrise motels, movie theaters and other small commercial buildings further contribute to the current low-intensity development pattern. The DOC 2 300' zone also extends one block deep along the Belltown neighborhood's southern edge abutting the retail core.

The emerging scale of development in the DOC 2 300' zone appears to be a combination of lower bulky structures like the convention center exhibition halls and Pacific Place retail galleria occupying sites of a block or more on the edge of the retail core, and towers built on smaller sites of a half-block or less. The new Federal Courthouse is a large full block development with a tower exceeding the 300' height limit, as well as a lower base structure and large plaza. Given the substantial number of underdeveloped parcels in the area and the potential for assembling large half- and full-block sites, it is reasonable to expect significant changes in the overall scale of development in the future.

In addition to the longer, rectangular blocks, the platting characteristics of the DOC 2 300' zone differ from those of the DOC 1 zone in that most of the north/south avenues are narrower. The longer, rectangular blocks, with the narrower avenue widths and greater distance between intersections, are likely to be perceived as a more enclosed street environment as the area becomes more intensely developed. A sense of this condition can be observed along 7th Avenue between Olive Way and Westlake Avenue, where recent high-rise projects line the street.

DOC 2 240' zone (southern edge of commercial core). The western portion of the DOC 2 240' zone includes several of Downtown's earliest large office towers, including the Hoge, Exchange and Dexter Horton Buildings, all of which exceed the current 10 FAR density limit that now applies in the zone. At 37 stories (487 feet), the Federal Office Building also exceeds the current 240-foot height limit. While much of the development in this western portion was built in the early decades of the Twentieth Century, this area also includes the zone's most recent project, the mixed-use Millennium Tower that was built to the maximum height and density limits allowed.

Relatively modest-scale City and County government buildings occupy most of the blocks in the area east of Third Avenue, although the two blocks along the hillside near I-5 are currently vacant. In general, existing development in the zone provides a transition between the high-rise, high-density commercial development in the DOC 1 zone to the north and older, lower-scale development in the Pioneer Square and International District Special Review Districts to the south.

Downtown Mixed Commercial (DMC) Zone

The DMC zone provides for a transition in the scale and intensity of development between the DOC 2 office core zone and adjacent neighborhoods north of Downtown, as well as the Denny Regrade/Belltown area to the west. The DMC zone also wraps around the western edge of the retail core (DRC) and DOC 1 zones to provide transition between the retail and office cores, the Pike Place Market and harborfront. The DMC zone is intended to: 1) permit office and commercial use, but at lower densities than in office areas; 2) support a mix of uses and accommodate a varied scale of development; 3) encourage housing and other uses generating activity without substantially contributing to peak hour traffic; and 4) promote development diversity and compatibility with adjacent areas, primarily through a range of height limits. The portions of the DMC zone included in this analysis have height limits of 125 feet, 160 feet and 240 feet. Generally, the mapping of these height districts establishes the transition in scale desired between the taller structures in the Downtown office core and the lower scale of development in adjacent neighborhoods.

The DMC zone extending north of Virginia Street and along the northern edge of the Denny Triangle separates the DOC 2 300' office core zone from Belltown and the South Lake Union/Cascade neighborhoods. This portion of the zone is platted with long rectangular blocks. This area today could be characterized as "underdeveloped," with many blocks occupied by surface parking lots, car dealerships, motels and other more automobile-oriented activities. However, several commercial and mixed-use projects are proposed in the area, many on full-block sites, which will introduce a much greater intensity and scale of development. Recent development in the area includes the City of Seattle's West Police Precinct, a congregate care facility, and the Metropolitan North Office Building; all built substantially below the maximum height and density allowed. Projects with permits received or pending include the Touchstone project at 1000 Stewart Street and a redevelopment of the Frederick Cadillac site at 2300 Fifth Avenue. Both of these projects are large floor-plate commercial structures occupying full-block sites and about 14 to 17 stories in height. A mixed-use, residential and commercial project comprised of three towers is also proposed for the Quinton Instruments site at 2200 Westlake and Denny Way.

The portion of the DMC zone west of the DOC 1 office core zone and the retail core is platted with long, rectangular blocks north of University Street, and smaller square blocks (240-foot lengths) to the south. Blocks between Western Avenue and Alaskan Way are essentially the size of half-blocks platted without alleys. The old Federal Office Building occupies a full block interrupting the continuity of Post Alley. This area has a much more established development character, with bulky, relatively low height brick warehouse structures from the late 19th/early 20th Century occupying blocks along Western Avenue, and a mix of commercial structures occupying smaller sites stretching the length of First Avenue between Pioneer Square and the Pike Place Market. This area also includes the greatest concentration of designated landmark structures Downtown outside the special review districts and retail core. More recent developments in the area include the high-rise residential towers of the Newmark and Harbor Steps projects, the Seattle Art Museum, and Cornerstone's Waterfront Center, a combination of new and renovated mixed-use projects. While the height of much of the existing development is well below the permitted 160-foot and 240-foot limits, the high-rise residential towers reach the maximum height current zoning allows.

Existing Policies on Height, Bulk & Scale of Downtown Development

Policies in the Comprehensive Plan address several conditions related to the desired scale of development Downtown, as affected by allowances for height and bulk. In general, the policies specify that permitted height and bulk should achieve the following:

- Accommodate desired densities of uses and communicate the intensity and character of development in different parts of Downtown.
- Protect the light, air and human-scale qualities of the street environment, particularly in areas of distinctive physical and/or historic character; and

- Provide transition to the edges of Downtown to complement the physical form, features and landmarks of the areas surrounding Downtown.

Policy objectives include the following:

- A general tapering of height limits is desired from an apex in the office core downward to the perimeter of Downtown to provide transitions to the waterfront and neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown.
- Development standards are meant to guide the form and arrangement of large buildings to reduce shadow and wind impacts at the street level, promote a human scale and maintain a strong physical relationship with the pedestrian environment. In areas where consistency of building form is important to maintaining an identifiable character and function, building bulk is to be regulated to integrate new and existing development.
- The bulk of tall buildings is to be limited in residential areas to provide for light, air and views at street level and reduce the perceived scale of buildings.
- Development standards are to vary by district to reduce the impacts of large-scale buildings consistent with the desired scale and development pattern in the area.

Additional policies specifically related to height and scale in affected zones are as follows:

- **DOC 1.** Allow the highest density of commercial development Downtown, with development standards regulating building design to reduce adverse impacts, including impacts on sidewalks and other public areas.
- **DOC 2.** Provide for scale and density transitions to adjacent areas.
- **DMC.** Promote development diversity and compatibility with adjacent areas through a range of height limits.

Existing Downtown Zoning Measures Addressing Height, Bulk and Scale

The DOC 1, DOC 2 and DMC zones employ a variety of measures to address issues of development scale. While the FAR density limits on commercial use and the height limits help define the overall building envelope for development in these zones, additional measures that control building bulk include:

1) **property line setback limits** and **minimum façade heights** address street level conditions;
2) **building coverage limits** and **maximum façade widths** that apply to the upper level of development; and
3) **view corridor setbacks** in some DOC 1 and DMC locations.

Since residential use is exempt from the FAR density limit, the height limit and these development standards provide the only restrictions on the permitted scale and bulk of residential structures. Consequently, mixed-use and residential projects can be bulkier and potentially taller than commercial-only projects subject to the FAR limit.

TDR Program. Development incentives that influence the overall development scale in Downtown areas include the transfer of development rights (TDR) program, floor area bonuses, and height incentives. The TDR program allows the sale of unused development rights from a site to maintain desired conditions on that site, such as the preservation of an existing landmark or low-income housing structure. Once purchased, these development rights can be transferred to allow denser redevelopment on another site. The use of TDR is available to preserve existing landmark structures and low-income housing structures, as well as within-block TDRs to maintain a varied building scale within the same Downtown block, and to create new public open space.

Floor area bonuses. Floor area bonuses are another type of incentive allowing a project to gain additional floor area for providing certain desired public features on a project site, such as a plaza or parcel park. Development is also allowed to exceed the mapped height limit in DOC 1 and DOC 2 by as much as 20% as an incentive to design more slender structures and to provide either open space or lower-scale development at the base of a project. In addition to the intrinsic public benefit of preserving landmark buildings or low-income housing structures, or providing new parks and plazas, use of these incentives also contributes to a diversity of scale and architectural variety in densely developed Downtown areas.

Development standards and alley vacations. To some extent, existing development standards addressing building bulk in dense highrise structures also encourage large site assembly and alley vacations. Measures that encourage setbacks of upper floors to enhance the street environment constrain achievable floor sizes on half-block sites. This is also true of required setbacks along view corridors. To some extent, the alley vacation may be regarded as a tradeoff for measures employed to ensure adequate access to light and air along the more important public street environment. Generally speaking, office core developments with tower portions pulled back from the street have resulted in more comfortable conditions at street level than projects where tower facades rise uninterrupted from the street level.

Height, Bulk and Scale Characteristics of Recent Downtown Development

Within the study area, 17 projects with a total of 21 structures have either been completed, are currently under construction, or permitted since 2000. These projects were developed under the height, bulk and scale provisions of the current zoning code, and provide a good overview of the type of development currently occurring in the study area, as well as an indication of how the zoning has influenced that development. A more detailed description of the height, bulk and scale characteristics of projects developed under current zoning is provided in Appendix I.

IMPACTS

This section examines the potential impacts associated with zoning changes that would affect the permitted size and height of buildings, as proposed under the various alternatives. Under current zoning conditions, redevelopment of sites to accommodate taller, larger buildings is already allowed. The purpose of this analysis is primarily to assess the extent to which there may be additional impacts under the proposed changes, beyond those impacts associated with existing baseline conditions (e.g. Alternative 4 – No Action).

The height and size of structures affect the Downtown environment, and the public's perception of that environment, in several ways. Some of these impacts are relatively objective—taller bulkier buildings are more visible, they cast shadows over a larger area, and can contribute to a new scale of development that is considerably different than the established pattern in the area. Other impacts are more subjective and qualitative. Some of these impacts are addressed in City policies, which often seek to strike a balance between allowing bigger buildings to accommodate growth and maintaining the positive characteristics that contribute to the existing "feel" of the Downtown environment. To help achieve this balance, these policies have led to regulations intended to maintain compatibility between new projects and established development in an area, and to ensure a compatible relationship between development conditions in adjacent areas. Much of the discussion below evaluates the consistency between these policies and conditions expected to result from proposed changes under the various alternatives.

Alternative 1 – High End Height and Density Increase

By allowing taller, larger structures, changes to height and density limits would affect the height, bulk and scale of future Downtown development within the study area. These impacts interrelate with land use and urban design topics addressed in other sections of this EIS. For the height, bulk and scale topics, the impact discussion below is organized per the following outline:

Height

- Number of projected new buildings by height range
- How heights of new buildings relate to the zoning in the alternatives

Bulk

- Development density
- Site size
- Height and density relationships in zoning—how allowable bulk relates to allowable height in determining how buildings are designed in different parts of Downtown
- The patterns of "massing" of bulk in areas of Downtown due to future development

Scale

- Transition in allowable height and density between Downtown and adjacent areas
- Compatibility between new and existing development
- Effect on development diversity
- Effect on residential character of Downtown areas

Table 29 at the end of this section summarizes the height, bulk and scale impacts of the alternatives.

HEIGHT

Most of the study area was not subject to height limits prior to adoption of the Downtown Plan in 1985. In 1989, the height limits established by the Downtown Plan were reduced in the DOC 1 and DOC 2 300' zones under the CAP Initiative. Consequently, several existing structures exceed even the greatest increases proposed. Today, 12 buildings in the DOC 1 zone reach or exceed the current height limit of 450 feet, and seven of these also exceed the increase to 540 feet now allowed for projects meeting certain conditions. Five structures—Columbia Center/Bank of America Tower, Two Union Square, Washington Mutual Tower, Key Tower, and 1001 4th Avenue—exceed 585 feet, which is the greatest height increase proposed for DOC 1 in the EIS alternatives. In the DOC 2 300' zone, four structures exceed the current 300-foot height limits, and two of these—the Westin Hotel North Tower and Qwest Plaza—exceed 400 feet, which is the greatest height increase proposed for this zone in the EIS alternatives.

The EIS alternatives vary in terms of the number of additional tall buildings anticipated under proposed changes. Alternative 1 would establish higher height limits over more areas than the other three alternatives. Existing height limits also reflect current provisions that allow height increases above the mapped height limits under certain conditions, such as the 10% and 20% increases above mapped height limits allowed in DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones, and the additional height permitted for residential and mixed-use development through the Transfer of Development Credit (TDC) program in the Denny Triangle.

Alternative 1 would require fewer buildings to accommodate projected growth than the other alternatives, but would likely result in the greatest number of taller buildings. Table 26 below summarizes the possible

breakdown of future project heights, per an analysis of potential redevelopment for this EIS. The height of projected development under each alternative was estimated by analyzing the size of available redevelopment sites, the amount of floor area permitted on these sites under proposed density limits, and the number of floors, using standard floor sizes, that would be needed to accommodate this floor area under proposed height limits. Out of an estimated total of 55 future new structures in Alternative 1, approximately 36 structures (65%) would be more than 250 feet in height. This compares to 31 structures (55%) in Alternative 2, 28 structures (47%) in Alternative 3, and 26 structures (41%) in Alternative 4.

Table 26
Numbers of Projected New Buildings by Height Range

Height Range	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
0 - 150 feet	5	6	9	11
151 - 200 feet	5	9	9	10
201 - 250 feet	9	10	14	16
251 - 300 feet	7	5	9	12
301 - 400 feet	28	24	17	13
401 - 500 feet	0	1	1	0
Greater than 500 feet	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	**55**	**56**	**60**	**63**

Source: SPO, 2002

In the DOC 1 and DOC 2 office core zones, the FAR limit and size of development sites constrain the amount of commercial floor area in a project. Unless larger sites are created through alley vacations, most commercial-only buildings could accommodate permitted floor area in structures below the maximum height limits. Only seven sites are large enough (over 40,000 square feet) to allow an amount of floor area that would likely require a commercial-only structure to exceed current height limits. Because the height limits in DMC zones are lower than in office core zones, commercial-only structures would more likely extend to the height limits.

Denny Triangle would accommodate most new tall buildings. The greatest concentration of new tall buildings would likely occur in the DOC 2 zone in the Denny Triangle. In an area of about 20 blocks, 19 buildings with heights between 300 and 400 feet are projected, in addition to five buildings in this height range that have recently been completed, are under construction or permitted, and four existing structures built prior to 1990. The character of the area would substantially change over time and be largely shaped by this concentration of large, tall buildings of uniform height.

New tall buildings dispersed in Commercial Core. In the DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones of the central office core, only seven future structures would be expected to exceed 250 feet in height. More broadly dispersed in the area and adjacent to existing structures of equal or greater height, these projected structures would be relatively inconspicuous additions to the skyline.

New tall buildings concentrated on Edges of Belltown; dispersed on edges of Denny Triangle and Commercial Core. Another concentration of tall, primarily residential buildings in the 250- to 400-foot height range is expected along the southern edge of Belltown and northern edge of the Commercial Core between 2nd and 4th Avenues. Taller buildings would also likely be dispersed at locations on the northern fringe of the Denny Triangle and on the western edge of the Commercial Core between Seneca and Columbia Streets.

BULK

A structure's bulk is related to the size of the site it occupies and its volume—which is a function of the structure's height and coverage of the site from ground level to the top. Height and density limits affect bulk by determining how much floor area a building can contain and how that floor area can be distributed vertically. The spacing between structures, the degree of vertical and horizontal modulation in structures, and the balance of solids and voids in an area are all factors that influence the perception of bulk and contribute to the sense of whether an environment is comfortable or not. Furthermore, the bulk of new structures in relation to existing buildings influences perceptions of how well new development fits in with its surroundings. While these perceptions may be subjective, they are influenced by specific impacts attributable to bulk, including shadows and view reduction.

Development Density

The physical bulk of Downtown development is partly a function of permitted density. In the Downtown zones within the study area, development density is regulated for most commercial uses by a floor area ratio (FAR), while the density of other uses such as housing is only restricted by the height limit, setback standards and requirements for common recreation area. The commercial FAR is calculated as the ratio of a building's gross commercial floor area divided by the total lot area. For example, a building with 200,000 square feet on a 20,000 square foot lot would have an FAR of 10 (10 square feet of building floor area to every one square foot of lot area). For the purposes of this analysis, a floor area ratio is also calculated for residential and mixed use structures to allow comparison of the bulk of these structures to commercial structures subject to an FAR limit. The floor area calculations for these projects include the total floor area of all above-grade uses that contribute to the visible bulk of a structure, including those uses that are not regulated by FAR in the Code. For projects that include multiple structures on a site, the FAR reflects the combined floor area of uses in all structures on the site.

Among the alternatives, Alternative 1 would likely result in the fewest and generally the bulkiest projects. With proposed height and density increases, Alternative 1 is predicted to result in 39 developments with a total of 55 structures, including several projects sites with multiple structures (see Table 27).

The Land Use Code allows residential uses and some other uses (such as street-level retail) to be omitted from density limit calculations. These "exempted" uses can add to building bulk in mixed-use and residential-only developments, and would be a factor in the bulkiness of future development in the study area. Approximately 75% of the mixed-use and 60% of the residential projects are predicted to legally exceed the Land Use Code's maximum commercial density limits. This would be equivalent to approximately 15 projects with actual densities above 17 FAR or more. In the DMC zones where commercial-only projects would be subject to a maximum density limit of 10 FAR, residential and mixed-use projects could achieve actual densities in the 16 to 25 FAR range, depending on the height limit of the zone. In the DOC 2 zone where the commercial density limit would be 14 FAR, residential and mixed-use projects could approach actual densities in the 17 to 25 FAR range.

The analysis of Alternative 1 suggests that most residential development would occur in large residential and mixed-use developments. If market conditions dictate that fewer large-scale developments actually get built, then either a greater number of smaller developments would need to occur, or less housing would be accommodated in the study area.

Table 27
Potential Project FARs Achieved By Alternatives

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Commercial (office/hotel)*				
0 - 5 FAR			1	
5.1 - 7 FAR	3	4	4	8
7.1 - 10 FAR	5	4	6	9
10.1 - 14 FAR	3	5	4	8
14.1 - 17 FAR	4	5	5	
Mixed Use(commercial/residential)				
0 - 5 FAR	1	1	1	1
5.1 - 7 FAR				
7.1 - 10 FAR	1	1	1	1
10.1 - 14 FAR	1	1	3	2
14.1 - 17 FAR		4	4	4
17.1 - 20 FAR	6	2	1	1
20.1 - 25 FAR	3	3	2	2
Residential				
0 - 5 FAR	1	1	1	1
5.1 - 7 FAR	1	1	1	1
7.1 - 10 FAR				1
10.1 - 14 FAR	2		3	
14.1 - 17 FAR	2	3	4	6
17.1 - 20 FAR				1
20.1 - 25 FAR	6	5	3	2
TOTAL PROJECTS	**39**	**40**	**44**	**48**

* For commercial-only projects, parking is assumed to be located below grade and not counted in FAR, except in the DMC zone adjacent to the harborfront. Exempted retail space is not included in calculations.

Site Size

Table 28 below shows the range of site sizes accommodating projected development. Larger sites are expected to continue to be attractive for future development. All of the alternatives show development on the same number of the largest available sites—typically a full block in size and mostly located in the Denny Triangle. These sites accommodate a significant share of the projected growth and are generally occupied by the largest structures. Projects built on large sites will have the biggest impact on development scale in an area, especially in the Denny Triangle, where the scale of such projects will be dramatically different from what currently exists. Most projects, however, are on sites of about a half block in size located throughout the study area. The smallest sites are generally assumed to be occupied by residential projects. While residential sites may be small, they can accommodate relatively large

structures, primarily because residential use is not subject to a density limit, which allows structures to extend to the height limit at maximum site coverage.

Table 28
Size of Potential Project Sites

Lot Area (square feet)	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Less than 15,000	4	4	5	5
15,000 to 30,000	17	17	18	20
30,000 to 45,000	9	10	12	14
45,000 to 60,000	1	1	1	1
Greater than 60,000	8	8	8	8
TOTAL	**39**	**40**	**44**	**48**

Height and Density Relationship

The relationship between height limits and maximum allowable density in the Land Use Code influences the shape of buildings. The size of the project site affects the amount of floor area allowed, and so also influences building volume and design.

Height limit in DOC 2 zone may result in bulkier buildings. Some Downtown stakeholders have interpreted that the existing height limit in the DOC 2 300' zone is too constraining for accommodating permitted density. In other words, to develop a building with the maximum amount of floor area allowed, the arrangement of building bulk is often "forced" into a lower, bulkier building envelope rather than allowed to spread vertically into taller forms that would allow more flexible design and a better distribution of building bulk.

Proposed height and density increases may not remedy the bulk/design issue. In the DOC 2 300' zone, Alternative 1's proposed height and density changes would represent a 33% increase in the height limit (300 feet to 400 feet), and a 40% increase in permitted density, from 10 FAR to 14 FAR. If the current relationship between height and density (bulk) is interpreted to result in bulky structures on large sites, the proposed changes may not remedy the situation. As a comparison, the existing 450-foot height limit of DOC 1 has also been criticized as too constraining for development built to the zone's existing maximum density limit of 14 FAR.

Effect of rectangular blocks. The larger rectangular blocks present in the Denny Triangle DOC 2 zone create potential for a greater amount of allowable floor area per block than could be achieved on smaller square blocks. If the height limits create the need for large floor sizes to accommodate the permitted density, this could also increase the perceived bulkiness of development in the area.

Additional bulk from residential and other "exempt" uses. Perceptions of excessive bulk could become more pronounced as more mixed-use and larger residential development occurs. Since residential use is exempt from floor area calculations, the actual FAR achieved in a project could be considerably greater than the maximum FAR limit proposed for commercial uses. If all floor area above grade is counted, including exempted parking and retail uses, recent residential projects in DOC 2 and DMC 240 zones already approach densities of 20 FAR, even though the existing density limit for commercial use is 10 and 7 FAR respectively. Under proposed changes, mixed-use and residential projects could achieve total above-grade density in the 18 to 25 FAR range in DOC 2, while commercial density would be limited to 14 FAR.

Increased bulk in DMC zones. In the DMC zones, the increased commercial density (7 to 10 FAR) may be difficult to accommodate in areas with lower height limits in the range of 165 to 225 feet. These areas are located on the northern edge of the Denny Triangle and western edge of the Commercial Core along First and Western Avenues. Even with the increased height, development in these areas would likely appear bulky, which could be an issue for "edge" locations abutting less intensive zones.

Massing

In the discussion above, the term "bulk" is generally used to refer to the shape and volume of individual buildings. For the purposes of this discussion, "massing" refers to the overall urban form resulting from the accumulation of new projects in an area—or the combined bulk of several projects. Massing not only refers to the volume of a particular building, but also considers neighboring buildings and the space between them. Figure 17 shows future massing scenarios based on the projected distribution of new development. A more detailed view of potential conditions under Alternative 1 is provided on Figure 18.

Emphasis on redevelopment in the Denny Triangle. The greatest concentration of new development is expected in the DOC 2 zone of the Denny Triangle, where increased height and density limits will accommodate larger buildings than currently allowed. Given the number of available sites in the area, redevelopment of a large portion of the zone is anticipated, with structures built consistently to the height limits and with many projects accommodating a mix of uses in multiple structures on the same site.

Shape of blocks in Denny Triangle may influence perception of bulk. Given the platting characteristics and the amount of new development projected for the proposed DOC 2 400' and DMC 340' areas of the Denny Triangle, future development in portions of these zones may be perceived as excessively bulky, as new buildings would line the street on both sides, limiting views out and reducing access to light. This condition would be most pronounced in the eastern portion of the Denny Triangle, where the width of rights-of-way bordering the longer dimension of the rectangular blocks is only 66 feet, compared to widths of 84 feet or more for Avenues in the DOC 1 zone. The narrower street width would increase the sense of enclosure created by new development lining the street. Also, the spacing of cross streets only occurs every 360 feet, compared to every 240 feet throughout most of the DOC 1 zone. Because of the longer blocks, the massing of development would be less frequently interrupted by the open area of street rights-of-way. These conditions would affect access to daylight, shadowing and the perceived sense of enclosure within the public street environment. Also, existing bulk regulations such as upper-level development standards would tend to push the bulk of structures toward the middle of the block. This may limit opportunities for mid-block spacing between structures that might otherwise interrupt masses of building bulk and allow more daylight into the street environment.

New development in commercial core dispersed among existing structures. Development within the DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones of the Commercial Core would likely be dispersed among existing high-rise structures, filling in the limited number of remaining sites with structures likely to be similar in scale to adjacent structures built when the zoning allowed greater height and density.

New development in DMC zone relatively dispersed except along edge of Belltown. In the DMC zones of the edges of the office core, future development would likely be dispersed, limiting the overall potential impacts associated with the greater bulk of individual new buildings. An exception may be the DMC zone on the edge of Belltown where a number of sites could be developed with residential structures. Since residential use is not subject to a density limit, these structures could be considerably bulky, a condition that would be much more strongly perceived if several such structures were concentrated in one area. In the DMC zone along the western edge of the Commercial Core, the relatively deep upper-level view corridor setbacks required along most east/west streets in the area help integrate the larger scale of development allowed with existing development.

Seattle Urban Design Impact Study

Figure 17

Potential Massing of Future Development
Under Four EIS Alternatives

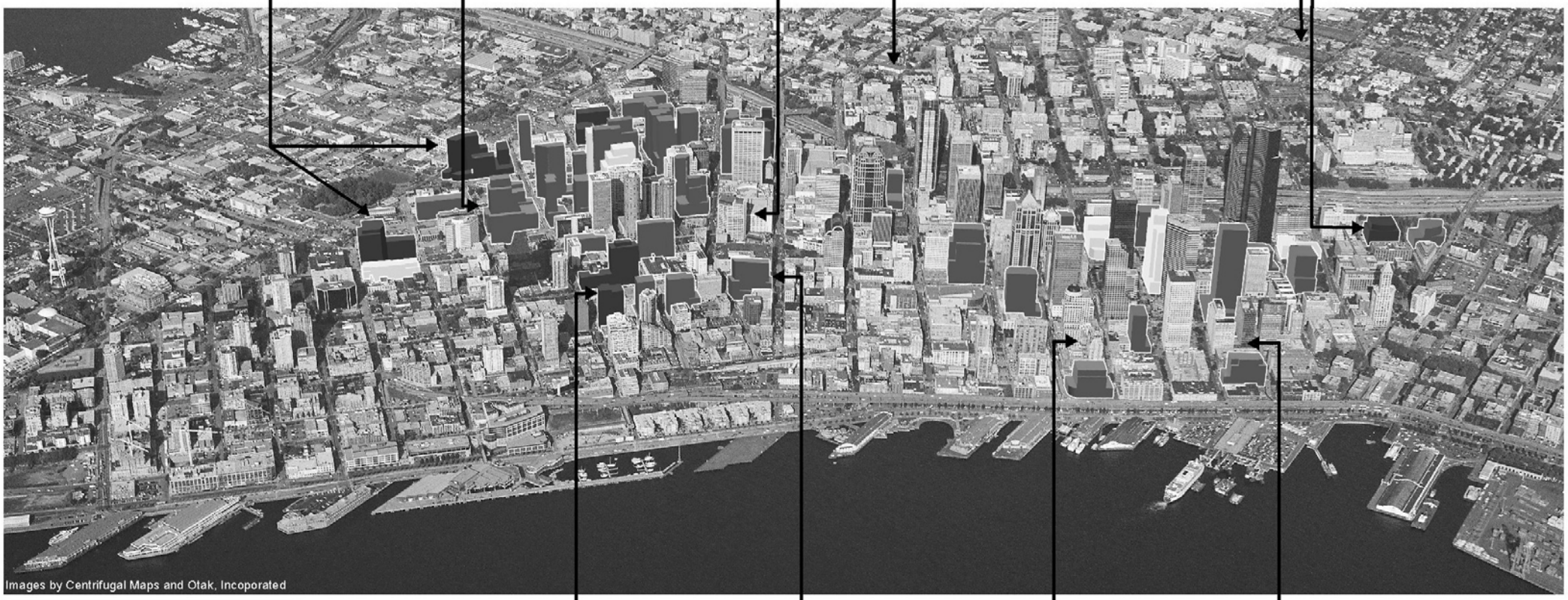
Alternative 1. - High End Height and Density Increases

Alternative 3. - Residential Emphasis

Alternative 2. - Concentrated Office Core

Alternative 4. - No Action (Existing Zoning and Development Regulations)

Figure 18



LEGEND

- Development projects currently under construction or with approved permits.
- Known planned development projects that may proceed; these projects could be modified to respond to potential zoning changes.
- Other predicted developments on sites identified as potentially available and developed under zoning proposed in this alternative.

10936/gis/tony_koski_final.apr/alternative 1 tony koski map
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ALTERNATIVE 1
High End Height and Density Increases

SCALE

The term "scale" is used to describe the characteristics of new development in relation to the surrounding development context. The discussion covers both the existing built context—what actually exists on the ground today—and the potential built context that could be created by future development.

Transition

Alternative 1 would introduce several changes to the scale relationship established in the 1985 Downtown Plan. To implement policies calling for transitions in the scale and intensity of development between the high-density office core and adjacent, less-intensive neighborhoods, a variety of zones with a range of height and density limits were established. The DMC zones and DOC 2 240' zones in particular were created to promote desired transition areas. Sensitive transition areas considered in this analysis are identified in Figure 19.

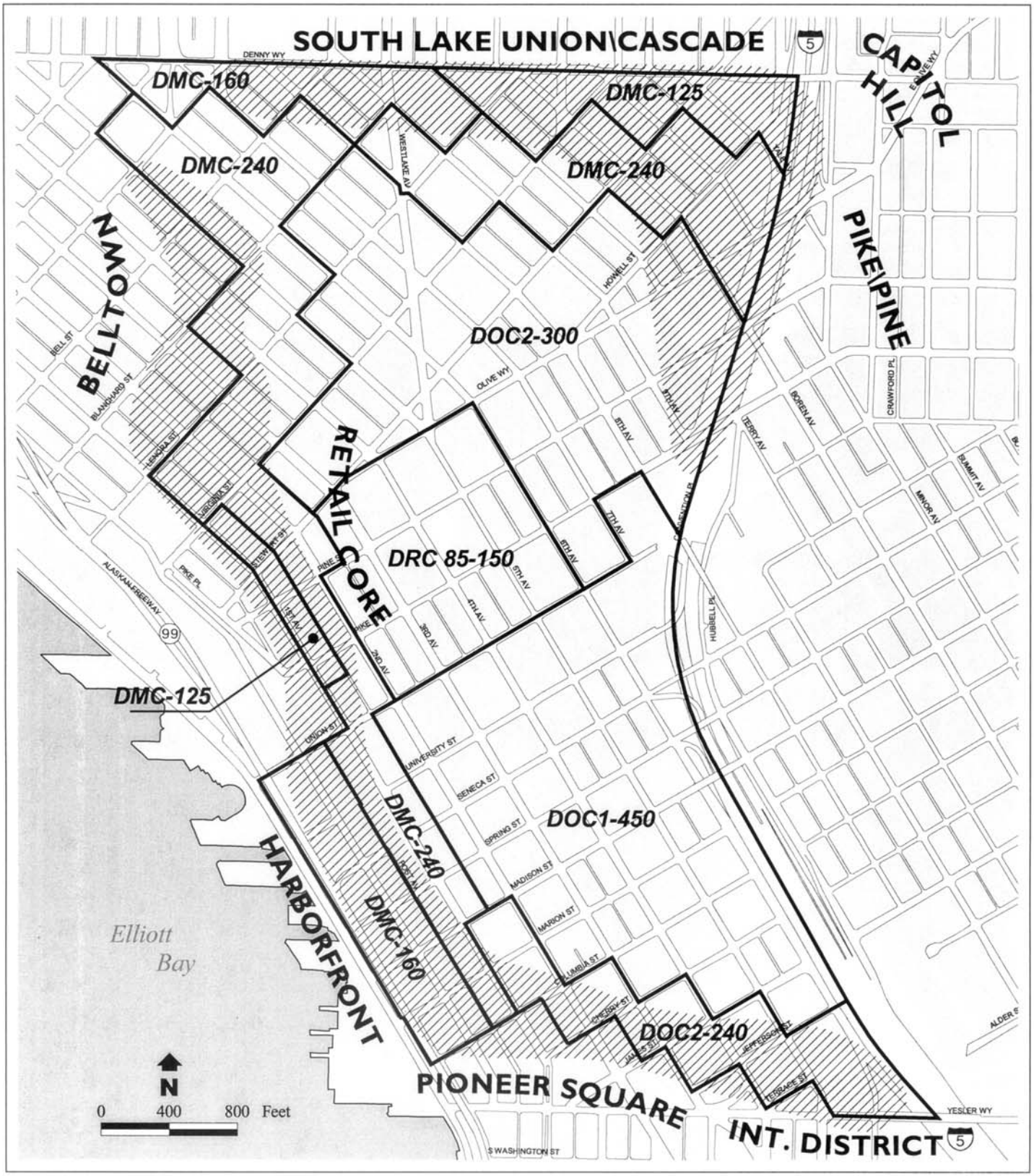
Alternative 1 would result in the most abrupt changes in height, bulk and scale along edges of identified sensitive transition areas. Table 29 at the end of this section summarizes the transition impacts of the alternatives. A more detailed description of the nature of these impacts is provided for each location in Appendix I.

Development Compatibility

Development compatibility considers the relationship between new projects and existing development in an area. While current Downtown zoning allows new projects to be larger than much of what currently exists, consideration is also given to maintaining compatibility with existing development characteristics of an area. The zoning assigned to an area does not necessarily assume that the ideal condition is one where every site is developed to the maximum limits allowed. Specific measures, such as landmark preservation, variable-scale TDR, incentives for small lot development, and guidelines for street and alley vacations—to name a few—recognize the importance of integrating new projects into the existing development context.

General. In general, current zoning allows a larger scale of development than what currently exists in many areas, and the difference in this relationship under any of the alternatives is marginal.

- **Denny Triangle.** Under Alternative 1, as in the other alternatives, most new development would be concentrated in the DOC 2 300' and DMC 240' zones of the Denny Triangle. This area today is generally characterized by low-intensity development including surface parking lots and small-scale structures, with some larger, more recent projects clustered on the southern and western edges of the DOC 2 zone and in the DMC zone along the I-5 edge. Most existing structures that now appear to be relatively large, such as the Camlin Hotel and Paramount Theater, will appear more modest in scale as newer, larger projects occupy adjacent sites. Under projected growth, the area would experience considerable redevelopment over the next 20 years, introducing a whole new scale and intensity.
- **DOC 1.** Future projects in the DOC 1 zone will be dispersed on sites throughout the office core, and will be compatible in scale—and in many cases smaller—than existing high-rises.
- **DMC.** In the DMC zones along the western edge of the Commercial Core and southern edge of Belltown, many recent projects built under current zoning exceed the scale of the older buildings establishing the area's existing scale and character. Under Alternative 1, even larger buildings would be possible in the future with the proposed increases in height and density limits.



SENSITIVE TRANSITION AREAS

FIGURE 19

Areas separating more intensive downtown zones from less intensive neighborhoods

Strategic Planning Office
City of Seattle
May 20, 2002

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Landmark structures. In this analysis, impacts on historic resources include consideration of the physical relationship between future development and adjacent landmark structures, and whether those conditions negatively affect the qualities of the landmark structure. To provide a relative comparison of potential impacts between alternatives in terms of the compatibility between new development and existing designated Seattle landmark structures, three locations including both landmark structures and sites considered likely to be redeveloped were selected for analysis. The following locations were selected because they are geographically dispersed within the study area, provide examples for each of the different zones affected by the changes, are adjacent to identified potential redevelopment sites, and more than one landmark structure is visible, including one meeting SEPA criteria for view-protected landmarks:

- DOC 1 location: Rainier Club (810 4th Avenue) and Leamington/Pacific Hotel and Apartments (317 Marion Street).
- DOC 2 location: Paramount Theater (901 Pine Street) and Camlin Hotel (1619 9th Avenue).
- DMC location: Terminal Sales Building (1932 1st Avenue) and Moore Theater and Hotel Building (1932 2nd Avenue).

Figures 20 through 22 illustrate potential development on sites adjacent to these structures. For all three cases under all alternatives, including development that can occur under current zoning, new projects on adjacent sites are substantially greater in scale than the existing landmark structures.

Pacific Hotel and Rainier Club (DOC 1 Zone). In this DOC 1 location, the neighboring Bank of California Center, 5th Avenue Plaza, Columbia Center and new IDX Tower already establish a pronounced contrast in scale with the two landmarks. Looking south down 4th Avenue at Marion Street, the existing urban environment is already comprised of interesting contrasts of scale, building age, and architectural style. While the Rainier Club and the Pacific Hotel, and to some extent the YMCA Building, are similar in terms of scale, materials (all brick structures), age, and architectural style, they contrast dramatically with the modern skyscrapers around them. Additional development filling in available sites nearby will intensify this condition. However, in this setting, it is the dramatic contrast in scale and architectural character contributes to the visual prominence of these landmarks.

Under all the alternatives, additional development would further contribute to the architectural variety and diversity of scale in the area. Combined, the landmark structures will continue to provide an enclave of pedestrian-oriented building scale among the skyscrapers. The historic low-density structures, with the generous setback of the Rainier Club, provide a feeling of openness and welcome sunlight. Conditions under Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 would be the same. The potential development depicted in Figure 20 under these alternatives is an office building of approximately 22 stories on a half-block site one block south of the Pacific Hotel. In Alternative 4, the new structure is slightly lower in height, at approximately 18 stories. With heights in the range of 230 to 290 feet, these structures are considerably below the maximum height limit allowed by zoning, which is up to 540 feet under existing conditions and 585 feet under the other alternatives. With the nearest projected development located a block away from landmark structures, the additional impact on the landmarks is minimal given the number of other taller buildings in the vicinity. However, it should be noted that both landmarks are located on blocks with other sites that, over the longer term, could be redeveloped. For either landmark, having a significantly larger structure located on the same block could create a more incongruous scale relationship, where the new development could appear to overwhelm the abutting smaller landmark structure.

Under all alternatives, street level standards that apply to 4th Avenue under its Class I Pedestrian Street designation should promote a compatible street level relationship between new and existing buildings. It should be noted, however, that as a private club and a residential building, the private nature of street level uses in the landmark structures already limits street level activity along this stretch of 4th Avenue.

Paramount Theater and Camlin Hotel (DOC 2 Zone). Located in the Denny Triangle, the Camlin Hotel and Paramount Theater today are moderate-scale structures, visually prominent in their existing setting amidst the open expanses of surface parking lots and the two-block Convention Place Transit Station site. The two landmark structures are of the same vintage and materials (brick) and compatible architectural style. The multi-block Convention Center complex is to the southwest. Though massive in scale, the portion of this project that extends closest to the landmark structures is of compatible height. Other development nearby ranges widely in scale, from one-story retail buildings to the 33-story 1600 Qwest Plaza Tower one block east of the Camlin. The view of existing conditions shown on Figure 21 looks across an existing car dealership lot, which, in the Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan, is identified as a desired location for public open space.

A substantial amount of new development is expected in this DOC 2 area over the next 20 years. Given the location of potential development sites, including the air rights above the transit station blocks, these two buildings, now considered on the fringe of Downtown, will likely be surrounded by highrise buildings expanding northeastward from the core. An alley vacation on the Camlin Hotel block and the superblock site of the Convention Place Transit Station could place substantially larger structures adjacent to the landmarks if these sites are developed to the maximum limits the zoning would allow. Given the similarities among the alternatives in the treatment of DOC 2 zoning at this location, and the close proximity of new structures to the Camlin, all alternatives will potentially have similar urban design impacts. The most extreme condition would occur under a scenario where the remainder of the Camlin block is assembled through an alley vacation and developed with a multi-structure mixed-use project. By combining both the maximum allowed commercial floor area and a substantial amount of exempted residential floor area, such a project could achieve densities in the 16 to 22 FAR range, depending on the alternative, creating the potential for large, bulky towers flanking the sides and rear of the structure, which could visually overwhelm it. This condition would be most extreme under Alternatives 1 and 2 because of the higher densities allowed.

At a more detailed level, the mid-block location and design of the Camlin results in exposed blank facades along the side property lines. Under the development practices of the day, structures of similar height and scale would have been anticipated to eventually abut these facades, forming a more or less continuous street wall. With the added flexibility the alley vacation allows, future towers could pull back from this front façade line, creating a less cohesive street wall where the new and old structures adjoin.

The site of the Paramount Theater occupies most of what remains of a block sliced on one corner by Interstate 5 right-of-way. With development above I-5 unlikely, and only a relatively small portion of the remaining block available for redevelopment, major scale conflicts between the Paramount Theater and other potential development on the same block are not anticipated.

In terms of potential scale conflicts between these landmarks and new development, differences among the alternatives are likely to be marginal. However, the high floor area densities achievable in mixed-use or residential developments increase the potential for incompatible scale relationships, especially on larger sites created by alley vacations. Measures that might mitigate these impacts, such as spacing between towers and upper level setbacks, could not likely be achieved without a reduction in development density. On the other hand, larger sites, like the Convention Place Transit Station site, provide added flexibility for siting new development that could help promote a more compatible relationship with the landmarks on neighboring blocks, provided these sites are not built to the maximum achievable density.

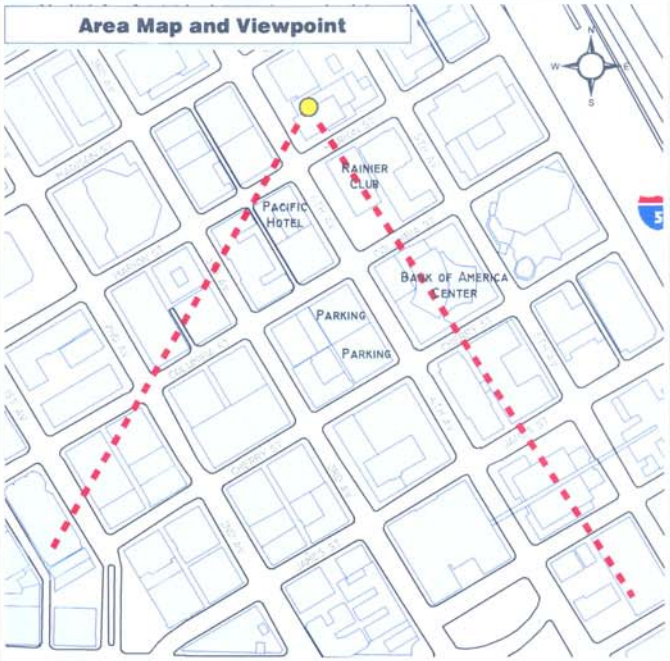
Figure 20

Seattle Urban Design Impact Study

DOC-1 Zone

View South from 4th Ave. and Marion St. (Pacific Hotel in center)

Area Map and Viewpoint



Existing Conditions - photograph

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Alternative 1 - future conditions (simulation)

Alternative 4 - future conditions (simulation)

Figure 21

Seattle Urban Design Impact Study

DOC-2 Zone

View South from Terry Ave. and Howell St. (Camlin Hotel in center)

Area Map and Viewpoint

Existing Conditions - photograph

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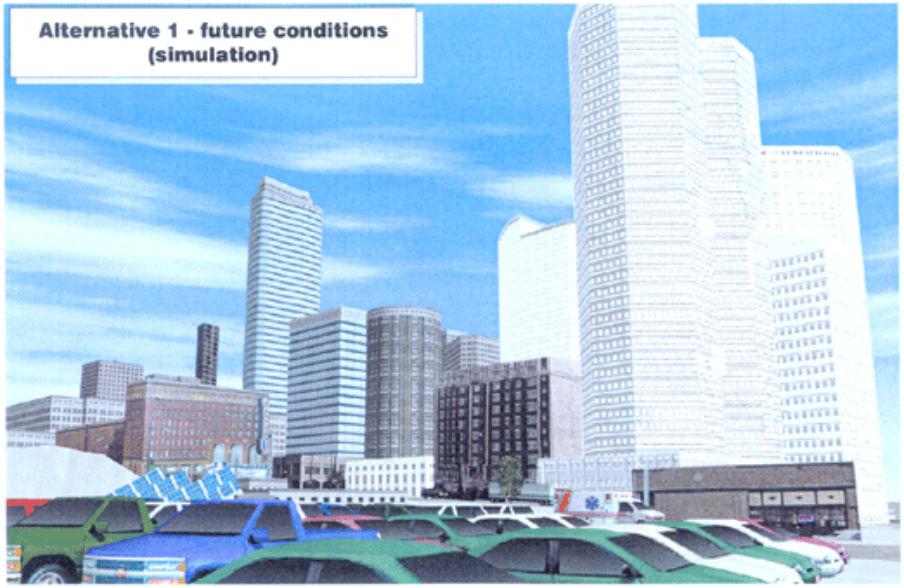
Alternative 1 - future conditions (simulation)



Alternative 4 - future conditions (simulation)

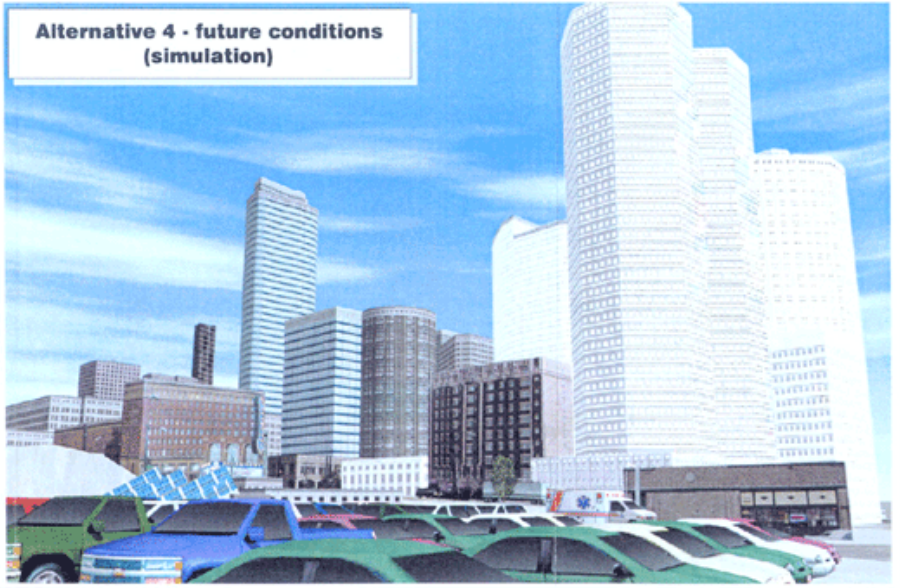


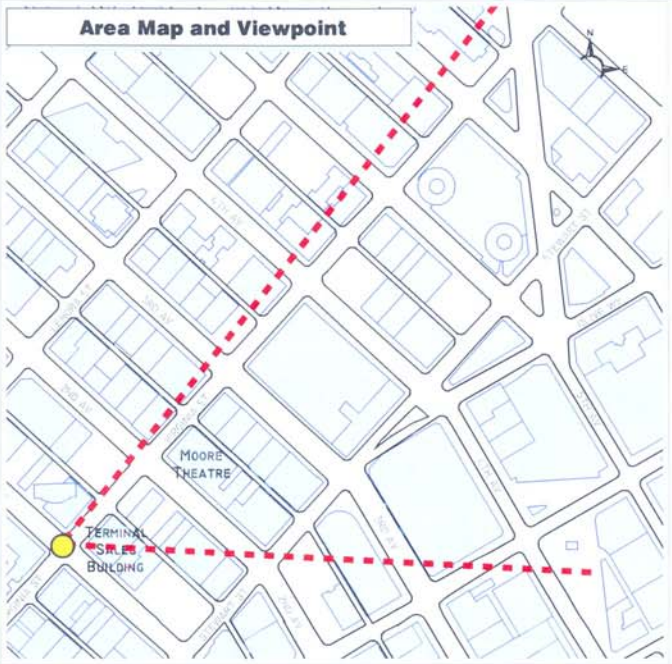
Figure 22

Seattle Urban Design Impact Study

DMC Zone

View Northeast from 1st Ave. and Virginia St. (Terminal Sales building in foreground)

Area Map and Viewpoint



Existing Conditions - photograph

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Alternative 1 - future conditions (simulation)

Alternative 4 - future conditions (simulation)

Figure 22

Seattle Urban Design Impact Study

DMC Zone

View Northeast from 1st Ave. and Virginia St. (Terminal Sales building in foreground)

Area Map and Viewpoint

Existing Conditions - photograph

10936/gis/rapidsite/rsimport1.apr/CAM 3

Alternative 1 - future conditions (simulation)

Alternative 4 - future conditions (simulation)

Terminal Sales Building (DMC 240) and Moore Theater and Hotel. Under existing conditions depicted in Figure 22, both of these landmark structures are visible in the view looking east down Virginia Street. Also, because of the location of the Terminal Sales Building in relation to the shift in the street grid at Stewart Street, it is visible from 1st Avenue for several blocks to the south. In the context of existing development, these landmarks are relatively large structures. The Pike Place Market area, with its lower scale of development, occupies blocks to the south and west. Development on the Market Place North block to the northwest is of a larger scale, and further north and to the east, taller buildings, like One Pacific Tower, Bell Center and the Josephinum, are scattered among development that is more typically in the two to five-story range. Scattered surface parking lots also contribute to the area's lower scale and open character.

Under all the alternatives, several sites in the vicinity of the two landmark structures are shown as likely to be redeveloped. Alternative 1 would allow taller structures than the other alternatives, and if developed as residential or mixed-use projects as shown, these structures could be quite bulky, given the limited bulk restrictions on residential use. The Terminal Sales Building would become visually less prominent as these larger structures join One Pacific Tower on adjacent sites. Additional large-scale structures would also advance closer to the landmarks as development occurs on sites in the DOC 2 zone further east. Currently, visible structures in this zone include the Westin Hotel and Westin Building located along 5th and 6th Avenues, with all the alternatives depicting new development advancing eastward as far as 4th Avenue.

Development diversity

Development diversity addresses the degree to which there is variation in the scale and character of development within an area. The combination of new and old structures, varied uses, and a mix of development scale and building types generally contribute to a more interesting urban environment; these conditions are supported by numerous Downtown development policies.

Under Alternative 1, as in all alternatives, the Denny Triangle DOC 2 zone would undergo substantial redevelopment to accommodate projected growth. This could result in a more homogeneous character with new projects of generally uniform height and density. However, because a range of building types would be needed to accommodate different uses, the mix of residential, commercial, and mixed-use structures could add interest and variety.

In other Downtown areas, new development would likely be more dispersed within the existing built environment, contributing to overall development diversity. Furthermore, because fewer sites would be required to accommodate projected growth under this alternative, more existing structures and uses would be expected to remain on sites shown as likely to be redeveloped under the other alternatives.

Residential Character

Development scale is often a component helping to define the residential character of an area. The scale of residential buildings reflects their function; they generally have smaller floor sizes and are less bulky to allow natural light into internal living spaces. The presence and contact with living spaces at street level increases the sense of an area as a residential environment, and this ground-level orientation is often encouraged through regulations and guidelines. Design requirements for projects accommodating housing also often result in more open areas and generally less building coverage, increased spacing between structures and landscaping, all of which enhance the residential quality of an area. Details like windows and balconies also contribute to the residential scale of development.

As under existing conditions, Alternative 1 does not designate residential zones within the study area. The Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan does specify locations where development of "residential enclaves" is desired. A substantial amount of housing would have to be built in the Belltown and Denny

Triangle portions of the study area—almost 6,500 dwelling units—if projected residential growth is to be accommodated. There are no provisions in Alternative 1 that specifically promote a desired residential character in the Denny Triangle. Because residential floor area, including above-grade accessory parking, is exempt from density limits, residential buildings could potentially become among the bulkiest structures in these areas. Also, achieving a beneficial residential character could be hampered by the probable mixing of residential and non-residential projects, and separation of housing from the street by multi-level base structures occupied by parking or other non-residential uses.

Alternative 2 – Concentrated Office Core

HEIGHT

Generally, the height characteristics of projected future development in Alternative 2 would be similar to Alternative 1. Most future tall buildings would be concentrated in the Denny Triangle DOC 2 zone, while other tall structures would be dispersed among existing skyscrapers in the DOC 1 zone. The height of development in DMC zones on the periphery of the office core zones in the Denny Triangle, Belltown and western edge of the Commercial Core neighborhoods would be the same as under existing conditions.

Approximately 31 new structures are predicted to be over 250 feet in height, 5 fewer than Alternative 1 (refer to Table 26). Approximately 11 of these would be residential structures and 8 would be mixed-use structures. Four of the residential structures and three mixed-use structures would likely extend above 250 feet by using the Transfer of Development Credit (TDC) height incentive. Of the 12 commercial-only structures over 250 feet tall, only six are developed to the maximum height allowed.

In the zones with height limits of 240 feet or less, all types of development—commercial, residential, and mixed use—would typically reach the height limit. Altogether, eight new structures are projected to exceed current height limits by using the TDC program.

BULK

Development Density

Under Alternative 2, the analysis indicates approximately 56 new structures would be built on 40 new project sites. The increased density limits for commercial use and height limits for all uses in DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones would result in development with bulk characteristics similar to Alternative 1 in these zones. Overall, there would be slightly fewer of the bulkiest residential and mixed-use projects under Alternative 2, partially because density and height limits would remain unchanged in DMC zones. Approximately 10 residential and mixed-use projects would exceed 17 FAR.

In part because Alternative 2 does not include height increases in the DMC zone in the Denny Triangle beyond what the TDC program now allows, the densities of residential and mixed-use projects range more widely than in Alternative 1. Only 46% of the projected mixed-use projects and 44% of the residential projects are predicted to have densities above 17 FAR. In the DMC zones where commercial-only projects would be subject to a maximum density limit of 7 FAR, residential and mixed-use projects are shown achieving actual densities in the 11 to 23 FAR range, depending on the height limit of the zone and the use of TDC. In the DOC 2 zone where the commercial density limit would be 13 FAR, the range of densities for residential and mixed-use projects would be similar to Alternative 1 (refer to Table 27).

Site Size

The size of sites accommodating projected development is essentially the same as under Alternative 1.

Height and Density Relationship

The height/density relationship in Alternative 2 would be similar to Alternative 1, except the proposed density increase in the Denny Triangle DOC 2 zone would be limited to 3 FAR rather than 4 FAR, resulting perhaps in slightly less bulky structures, given the height limits are the same under the two alternatives. Also, Alternative 2 maintains existing height and density limits in DMC zones, so any impacts of additional height and density identified in Alternative 1 would not apply in these areas.

Massing

Given the number, scale, and distribution of projected projects, massing conditions in this alternative would likely be similar to Alternative 1. Figure 23 below illustrates the potential massing of future development under Alternative 2.

Because it is assumed that growth will initially be attracted to available sites in the core zones, both Alternatives 1 and 2 show most of the 20 years of projected growth occurring in bigger projects in the DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones. During this 20-year timeframe, only limited development would occur in the DMC zones, where these alternatives differ in terms of permitted height and commercial density limits. Over the longer term, as more development pushes beyond the core, these differences would become more apparent, with the resulting scale of development in Alternative 2 generally lower than Alternative 1 around the perimeter of the core.

SCALE

Transition

Alternative 2 would for the most part retain the current height, bulk and scale relationship established by existing zoning along the edges of "sensitive transition areas" identified in the study area (refer to Figure 19). Table 29 at the end of this section summarizes the transition impacts of the alternatives. A more detailed description of the nature of these impacts is provided for each location in Appendix I.

Compatibility

General. Compatibility conditions in the office core zones of the Commercial Core and Denny Triangle would be similar to what is described under Alternative 1. No height and density changes would occur in areas zoned DMC, meaning less impact from future development than Alternative 1. However, future development would likely exceed the scale of existing development in those zones.

Landmark structures.

- **Rainier Club and Pacific Hotel landmarks (DOC 1).** Same impacts as Alternative 1
- **Camlin Hotel and Paramount Theater (DOC 2).** Similar to Alternative 1.
- **Terminal Sales Building (DMC 240).** No height and density increases in the DMC zones, meaning slightly less impact from future development than Alternative 1.

Development Diversity

Conditions would be similar to those described under Alternative 1.

Residential Character

Conditions would be similar to those described under Alternative 1.

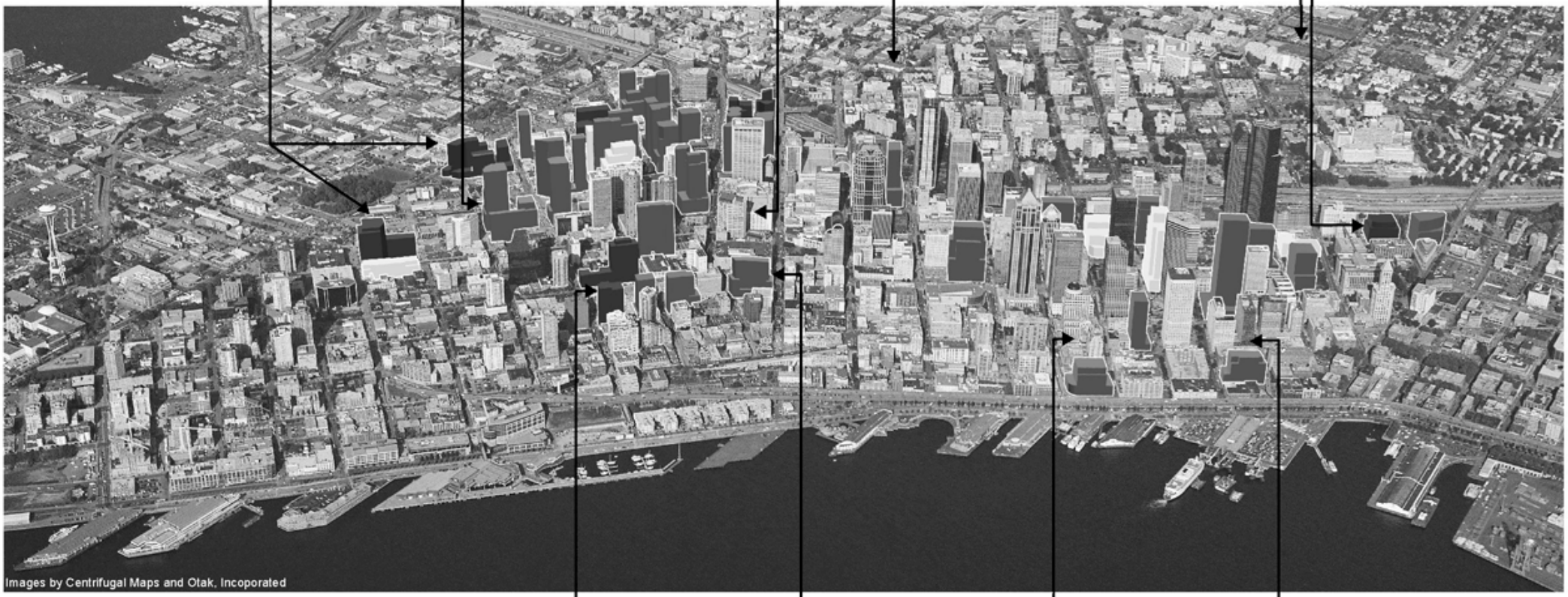
Figure 23

No additional projects predicted beyond currently known planned projects in area extending beyond office core to northern edge of Denny Triangle.

Greatest concentration of predicted development in Denny Trangle DOC-2 400 zone with increased height and density limits and adjacent DMC 240 zone retaining existing height and density limits.

Approximately six predicted projects in office core DOC-1 585 zone dispersed among development built prior to 1989.

Limited number of new projects dispersed in DOC-2 312 zone along southern edge of office core adjacent to International Special Review District



Images by Centrifugal Maps and Otak, Incoporated

LEGEND

- Development projects currently under construction or with approved permits.
- Known planned development projects that may proceed; these projects could be modified to respond to potential zoning changes.
- Other predicted developments on sites identified as potentially available and developed under zoning proposed in this alternative.

Bulky residential and mixed use development expected under existing height and density limits in the portion of DMC 240 zone extending from Commercial Core to Belltown.

No change to the scale of development under existing DMC 160 and DMC 240 zones between office core and Waterfront.

ALTERNATIVE 2
Concentrated Office Core

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Alternative 3 – Residential Emphasis

HEIGHT

Development projected under Alternative 3 includes 28 structures exceeding heights of 250 feet, 8 fewer than under Alternative 1. Approximately 9 of these would be residential structures and 7 would be mixed-use structures. Eight of the structures would gain added height through use of the TDC height incentive. Approximately 12 of the structures over 250 feet in height would be commercial-only structures and 8 of these would reach the maximum height limit allowed in their zone.

Alternative 3 would likely result in variation in the height of tall buildings in the Denny Triangle DOC 2 zone because the height limits would step down from 400 feet to 300 feet along the eastern and western flanks of the zone. The characteristics of tall buildings in other parts of Downtown would be similar to Alternatives 2 and 4, except that residential towers would be more slender in those areas proposed for rezone to DMR/C, where additional bulk controls would apply.

BULK

Development Density

Projected development under Alternative 3 would be distributed among 60 structures in approximately 44 projects. The lower density limits for commercial use in several areas, lower height limits in DMC and some DOC 2 areas, and additional bulk controls in areas reclassified DMR for residential use would require more projects than Alternative 1 and 2 to accommodate projected growth. The distribution of growth to more projects and the additional bulk limits on development in DMR areas would contribute to less bulky development overall. However, approximately 7 projects are predicted to have densities exceeding 17 FAR. Approximately 4 of these would be mixed-use projects (31% of the projected mixed-use projects) and three would be residential projects (30% of the residential projects). The overall distribution of project densities is displayed on Table 27.

Site Size

Under Alternative 3, slightly more sites in the half-block size range are required to accommodate projected growth at the lower densities proposed in some areas.

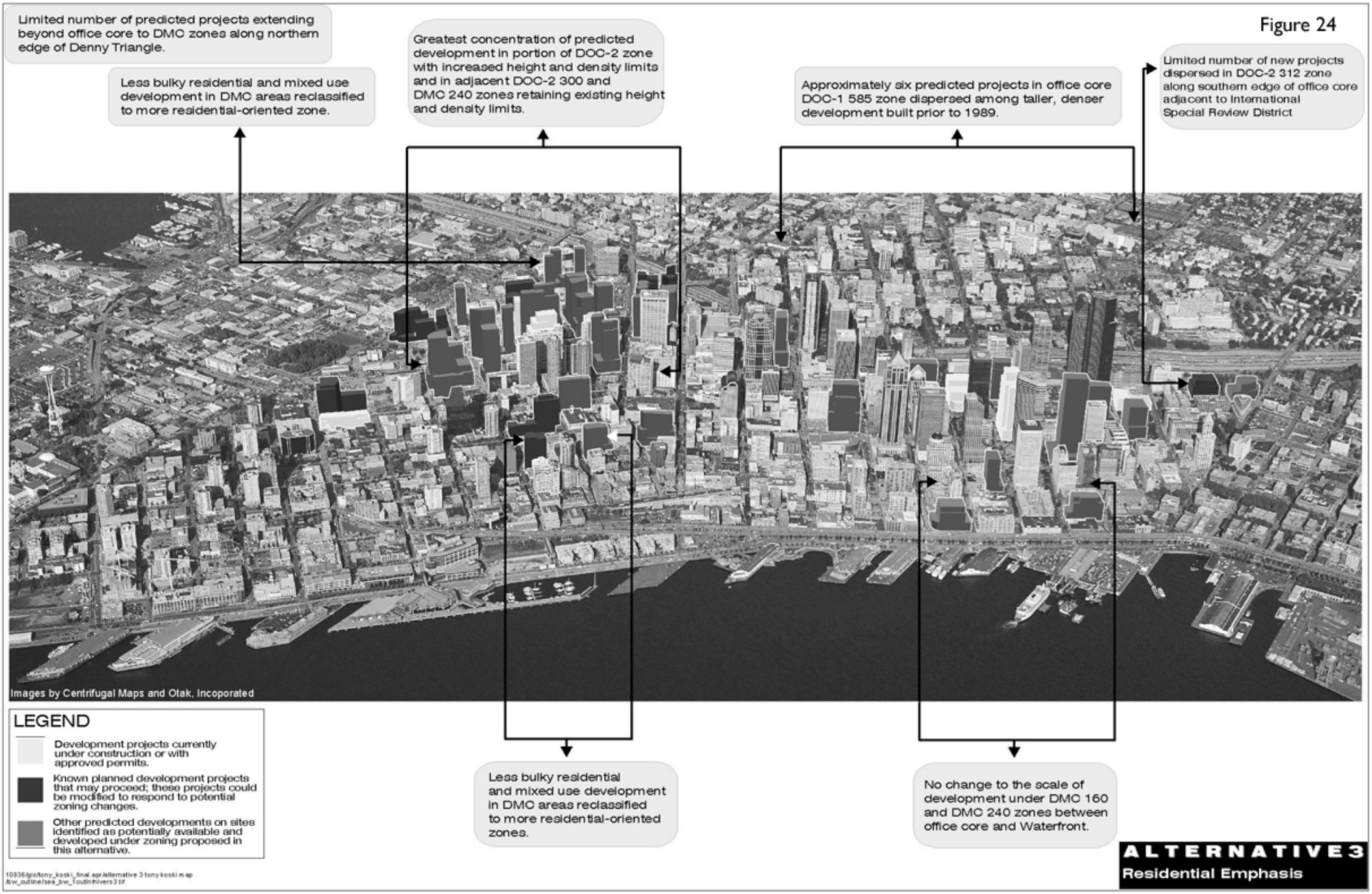
Height and Density Relationship

The height/density relationship impacts of Alternative 3 would be similar to those of Alternative 1, except the additional bulk effects identified in the DMC zones would be avoided.

Massing

In the treatment of the office core zones, Alternative 3 is primarily distinguished from Alternatives 1 and 2 by the retention of current height and density limits in the eastern and western edges of the DOC 2 300 zone in the Denny Triangle and Belltown. Figure 24 illustrates potential massing conditions under Alternative 3. Height and density increases would be limited to the "spine" of the zone extending along 6th, 7th and 8th Avenues from Union Street to Blanchard Street. Retaining current height and density limits for the portions of the DOC 2 zone along the edges of this "spine" would accommodate some transition in development intensity and a physical "stepping down" in development scale with adjacent residential and mixed-use zones in Belltown, the Denny Triangle and Pike/Pine. Furthermore, the wider street rights-of-way and angled crossings of Westlake Avenue, Olive Way and Stewart Street in the portion of the DOC 2 zone proposed for increased height and density would provide more spacing between large-scale developments and greater access to light and air than would occur in other portions of the zone.

Figure 24



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Retaining current height and density limits in DMC zones along the western edge of the Commercial Core and northeast and northwest corners of the Denny Triangle would result in the same development as under existing conditions. However, given the assumption that the lower density limits overall in this alternative will push more projects into these areas, changes over the next 20 years would be more apparent than under Alternatives 1 and 2. In DMC areas proposed for reclassification to a more residential-oriented zone, the additional controls on bulk would likely result in residential towers that are more slender than the commercial or residential development permitted in these areas under the other three alternatives.

SCALE

Transition

Alternative 3 would for the most part retain the current height, bulk and scale relationship established by existing zoning along the edges of "sensitive transition areas" identified in the study area (refer to Figure 19). Table 29 at the end of this section summarizes the transition impacts of the alternatives. A more detailed description of the nature of these impacts is provided for each location in Appendix I.

Compatibility

General. Compatibility conditions in the office core zones (DOC 1 and DOC 2) of the Commercial Core and Denny Triangle would be similar to the effects of Alternative 1. In the DMC zones, there would be no change from existing conditions. In areas proposed for reclassification to a more residential-oriented zone, additional bulk standards and lower commercial density limits could promote a more compatible relationship with existing development relative to the other alternatives.

Landmark structures:

- **Rainier Club and Pacific Hotel landmarks (DOC 1).** Impacts would be the same as Alternative 1.
- **Camlin Hotel and Paramount Theater (DOC 2).** Impacts would be slightly less than Alternative 1 because of the lower height and density limits that would apply in this portion of the zone. However, because of its size and because accommodating a major transit facility below grade would likely limit the amount of parking that could be provided, the Convention Place Transit Station site is not likely to be developed to the maximum density allowed under any alternative. Consequently, development on this site would likely be similar under all alternatives.
- **Terminal Sales Building (DMC 240).** Slightly reduced impacts relative to the other alternatives due to additional bulk limits that would apply in the DMC zone north of Virginia Street. However, future development would likely be larger in scale than existing development, and conditions in the remainder of the DMC zone south of Virginia Street would be the same as under Alternative 2. Maintaining current height and density limits in the Belltown portion of the DOC 2 zone to the east would mean slightly less impact from future development than under Alternatives 1 and 2.

Development Diversity

Conditions would be similar to those described under Alternative 1. However, with the increased number of projects and more development in peripheral zones, this alternative has a broader range in the scale of new development than Alternatives 1 and 2. On the other hand, redevelopment on more sites could mean the loss of more existing development and uses that contribute to development diversity and character.

Residential Character

Alternative 3 would establish a more residential-oriented zone in the north central portion of the Denny Triangle and would extend this type of zoning south from Belltown by one to two blocks. Over time, with the reduction in permitted commercial density in these areas, a greater concentration of residential

development would be expected, creating a stronger residential character relative to what currently exists or would likely occur under the other alternatives. The additional bulk standards that apply in these zones would help promote a more residential scale of development. In the Denny Triangle, Green Street improvements would further complement the residential character.

Alternative 4 – No Action

HEIGHT

Future projected development assumed under existing zoning in Alternative 4 includes as many as 26 structures exceeding heights of 250 feet—10 fewer than Alternative 1. Approximately 9 commercial-only structures would be over 250 feet, compared to 15 structures in Alternative 1; another 9 structures would be residential and 8 would be mixed-use. Eleven structures are assumed to gain height through TDC. Alternative 4 would likely result in the most structures less than 200 feet in height; slightly more than double the number in Alternative 1. This partly reflects the greater number of structures that would be needed to accommodate projected employment growth, resulting in several commercial structures locating in zones with lower height and density limits on the periphery of the office core, such as at the northern and northeastern edges of the Denny Triangle.

BULK

Development Density

Under Alternative 4, the projected growth would be distributed among 63 structures in approximately 48 projects—the greatest number of any alternative. Similar to Alternative 3, the greater number of projects needed to accommodate the same amount of growth would result in more projects with less bulky individual structures. The greater amount of commercial-only projects accommodated in the DMC zones would result in a lower-scale development than would be expected with higher commercial density limits or with more mixed-use development with greater amounts of exempt floor area. However, some of these projects are on relatively small sites, and could appear bulky because they would have several stories covering most of the site area. Approximately 7 mixed-use and residential projects are predicted to have densities exceeding 17 FAR, which amounts to 27% of the total projected mixed-use projects and 33% of the residential projects (refer to Table 27).

Site Size

Alternative 4 requires more sites, generally in the half-block size range, than the other alternatives to accommodate projected growth at densities permitted under current zoning.

Height and Density Relationship

The existing height/density relationship conditions caused by current zoning would remain unchanged by Alternative 4. Amendments in the recent past that allow additional height in DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones to promote more slender office towers should allow for better outcomes than some recent bulky development. However, the lack of density limits and only minimal bulk constraints on residential use could result in bulky residential and mixed-use projects, with those projects participating in the TDC program also gaining additional height.

Massing

As with the other alternatives, the DOC 2 zone of the Denny Triangle would be expected to accommodate the greatest concentration of new development, with structures built consistently to the height limit and with many projects including multiple structures on a site. The accumulation of these projects over time

on the long, rectangular blocks of the Denny Triangle would likely create the appearance of an uninterrupted mass of development extending northward from the current cluster of large buildings in the office core. In a more scattered pattern, lower-scale development would extend to the northern reaches of this part of Downtown.

Development within the DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones of the Commercial Core would likely be more dispersed among existing high-rise structures. The limited number of remaining sites would be filled in with structures similar to or smaller than the scale of adjacent structures built under earlier zoning that allowed greater height and density. Bulkier towers are expected to extend northward from the retail core to form a cluster on the edges of Belltown, and scattered development is also expected on the few remaining sites along the western edge of the Commercial Core between the office core and the Harborfront. Figure 25 below illustrates potential massing conditions under Alternative 4.

SCALE

Transition

Alternative 4 reflects the existing transition relationship established under current zoning. The overall pattern of building heights stepping down from the core and the desired gradation in the intensity of development reflected in the zoning implementing current Downtown policies would be maintained. Alternatives 2, 3 and 4 would result in lower development height and density than Alternative 1 along most edges separating Downtown from abutting neighborhoods. A more detailed description of the nature of these impacts is provided for each location in Appendix I.

Compatibility

Alternative 4 reflects development under existing zoning. Overall compatibility of uses would be similar to Alternative 1, except in the DMC zone, where no height and density changes would occur.

Development Diversity

Overall development diversity conditions would be similar to Alternative 1. However, with the increased number of projects and more development in peripheral zones, Alternative 4 has the broadest range among the alternatives in the scale of development.

Residential Character

Overall residential character conditions would be similar to those described under Alternative 1.

Impact Summary Table

Table 29 summarizes the findings of the Height, Bulk and Scale impacts section, for the convenience of the reader.

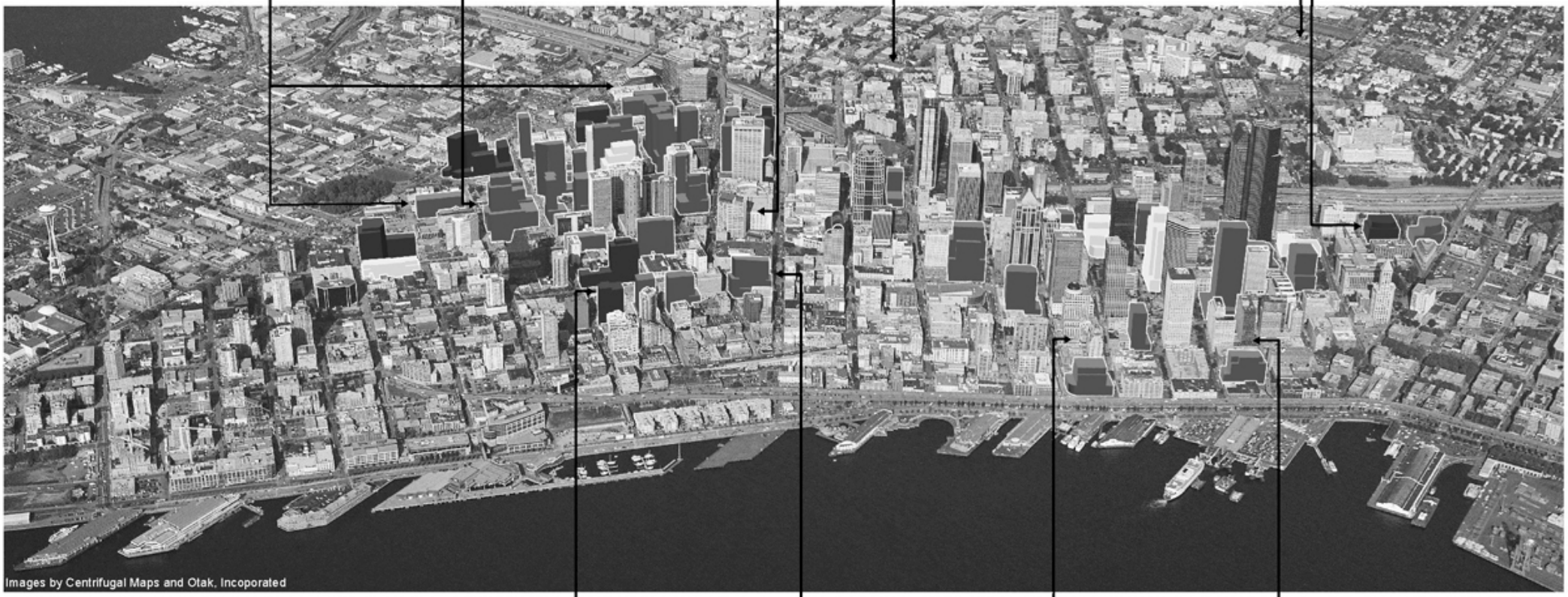
Figure 25

More development predicted to extend beyond office core to DMC 125 and DMC 160 zones along northern and eastern edges of Denny Triangle.

Greatest concentration of predicted development in Denny Triangle DOC-2 300 and DMC 240 zones. Several residential and mixed use projects in these zones shown with 30% height increase currently allowed through transfer of development credits (TDC), making some of these projects similar in height to those shown in other alternatives with greater height limits.

Approximately seven predicted projects in office core DOC-1 zone would be lower than in other Alternatives and dispersed among taller, denser development built prior to 1989.

Limited number of new projects dispersed in DOC-2 312 zone along southern edge of office core adjacent to International Special Review District



Images by Centrifugal Maps and Otak, Incoporated

Bulky residential and mixed use development expected under existing height and density limits in DMC 240 zone extending from Commercial Core to Belltown.

Scattered development on available sites in DMC 160 and DMC 240 zones between office core and Waterfront.

LEGEND

- Development projects currently under construction or with approved permits.
- Known planned development projects that may proceed; these projects could be modified to respond to potential zoning changes.
- Other predicted developments on sites identified as potentially available and developed under zoning proposed in this alternative.

ALTERNATIVE 4
No Action
(Existing zoning & development regulations)

10936/gis/tony_koski_final.apr/alternative 4 tony koski map
ltw_outline/sea_bw_1outlnhivers4.tif

Table 29
Summary of Height, Bulk and Scale Impacts

	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4
Height				
New buildings by height range	Approx. 36 structures greater than 250 feet in height (65% of new structures).	Approx. 31 structures greater than 250 feet (55% of new structures).	Approx. 28 structures greater than 250 feet (47% of new structures).	Approx. 26 structures greater than 250 feet (41% of new structures).
Differences in zones	Greatest concentration of new development would occur in the DOC 2 zone of the Denny Triangle.	Similar to Alt. 1.	Similar to Alt. 1. However, height/ density changes in more limited area of DOC 2.	Similar to Alt. 1. However, no height/density changes would occur.
	New development in peripheral DMC zones would be taller than possible today.	New development in DMC zones not as tall as Alt. 1, same as allowed by existing zoning.	Residential towers would be more slender in areas rezoned DMR/C.	More development at existing height limits expected to occur in peripheral areas.
Bulk				
Development density	Would likely result in the fewest and bulkiest projects: 39 developments with 55 structures.	Nearly the same as Alt. 1: 40 devs with 56 structures, but slightly fewer of the bulkiest types.	Bulk would be spread across more projects: 44 devs and 60 structures.	Bulk would be spread across more projects: 48 devs and 63 structures.
	Additional bulk from exempted residential uses and a few "other" uses would contribute to actual building bulk legally exceeding maximum density limits.	Similar to Alt. 1, but fewer developments would achieve the higher end of densities.	Fewer developments than Alt. 1 or 2 would reach higher densities, due to lower height limits and more bulk controls.	Similar to Alt. 3.
Massing patterns	Greatest massing of bulk would occur in the Denny Triangle.	Similar to Alt. 1, but lower scale at periphery.	Retention of existing height/density at east and west edges of Denny Triangle DOC 2 zone would provide some "stepping down" in massing of bulk.	Similar to Alt. 1, but less-bulky development spread over more sites in Denny Triangle.
	Rectangular shape of blocks would contribute to perceived bulkiness of development in the Denny Triangle. Bulk would tend to locate toward the middle of blocks.	Similar to Alt. 1.	Similar to Alt. 1.	Similar to Alt. 1, but with less-bulky development spread over more sites.
	New development in peripheral areas more dispersed, except for potential concentration	Similar to Alt. 1 but lower scale of development at periphery.	Similar to existing zoning, but more bulk controls in some areas may result in	Similar to Alt. 3, but no additional bulk controls would allow some

	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4
Massing patterns (continued)	in edge of Belltown.		residential towers that are more slender.	bulkier new development.
Height and density relationships	Alt. 1 changes may not resolve an existing issue that results in bulkier building designs. It may be difficult to fit all of the maximum commercial density within proposed DMC height limits between 165 and 225 feet (near Denny Way, and 1st Ave/Western Ave vicinity).	Similar to Alt. 1. Without these changes, this impact would not occur.	Similar to Alt. 1. Without these changes, this impact would not occur.	Existing issue of height/density relationship would remain. Not applicable.
Scale **Transitions**	Greatest differences among the alternatives in zoning height/density with adjacent areas (Pike/Pine, Denny Way, Belltown, Pioneer Sq./ Int. Dist., harborfront, retail core).	Fewer changes in transitions than Alt. 1, due to no changes in zoning near Belltown, Denny Way, or 1st Ave/ Western Ave vicinity.	Lower commercial density limit and additional bulk limits for towers would make transitions more gradual in the Denny Way, Bell-town and 1st Ave/ Western Ave vicinities.	Transitions provided by the existing zoning pattern would be maintained.
Compatibility with existing development	Intensity of new devel-opment in Denny Tri-angle would generate greatest differences in compatibility with existing development.	Less impact than Alt. 1 in the peripheral DMC zones. Similar impacts to Alt. 1 in Commercial Core.	Alt. 3 changes would promote greater compatibility in residential-oriented zones. Similar to Alt. 1 for the DOC office core zones.	Similar to Alt. 1, except for DMC zones where no zoning changes would occur.
Effect on development diversity	Amount of redevelop-ment in Denny Triangle could potentially result in a more homogene-ous character.	Similar to Alt. 1.	Similar to Alt. 1, but broader potential range of scale in new structures.	Similar to Alt. 1, but the broadest potential range of scale in new structures.
Effect on residential character	Overall additional bulk of development and mixing of residential and non-residential projects could discour-age achievement of a beneficial residential character.	Similar to Alt. 1.	Residential-oriented zoning in some areas creates some greater potential for achieving beneficial residential character.	Similar to Alt. 1.

MITIGATION STRATEGIES

REQUIRED/PROPOSED MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Given the type and magnitude of impacts discussed in this section, no mitigation measures or strategies are required or proposed to be mandatory actions accompanying approval of any of the alternatives.

OTHER POSSIBLE MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Based upon conditions observed in graphic skyline representations and the analysis of project prototypes depicting development conditions under the various alternatives, the following potential mitigation measures have been identified for consideration.

Height

The mapping of height limits could be more "fine-grained" to better achieve the variety of development conditions desired in different Downtown locations. For example, in areas where it is desirable to maintain the present scale and character of development, height limits more closely reflecting existing conditions could be applied to ensure a more compatible relationship between new projects and existing structures. Added height could increase the prominence of one area by making the buildings located there more visible from other areas, and lower height limits could help define special environments, such as residential enclaves or neighborhood shopping streets, where a more pedestrian-scale of development is desired. Variation in the heights of buildings, however it is achieved, would add interest to the skyline.

Bulk

Bulk Characteristics of Development

- Encourage more slender, tapering towers by allowing additional height contingent upon a reduction in bulk/floor size as structures increase in height. This measure would be similar to provisions in current zoning that allow additional height in DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones if there is a reduction in the size of floors in the portion of the structure extending above the mapped height limit.
- Reduce the floor size limit exempt from upper-level development standards for residential use. Currently, structures with floor sizes of 15,000 square feet or less are exempt from upper-level development standards. This standard reflects a relatively small floor size for commercial buildings and was intended to provide an incentive for more slender, smaller-scale commercial towers. When applied to residential use, the 15,000 square foot threshold represents a very large residential floor size. Without any limits on building dimensions or floor area density, this exemption could result in bulky, slab residential towers.
- Establish development standards for the residential portion of structures, similar to those that apply in the Downtown Mixed Residential zone, as an alternative to addressing the potential bulkiness of residential and mixed-use projects. Such standards could include minimum site size requirements, separation of facades, coverage limits at various height elevations, maximum façade dimensions and maximum floor size limits. These measures could be limited to designated areas, perhaps through overlays, to achieve specific objectives such as a stronger residential character or better transition in scale, or could apply only as conditions for structures exceeding current height limits.
- Consider how the use of color and materials in building design could mitigate perceptions of bulk; structures with dark, uninterrupted facades are often perceived as bulkier than lighter-clad, more articulated structures of similar volume.

Massing

- Require upper-level setbacks under certain conditions, such as along specifically designated streets where a more "open" character is desired, or along all or portions of frontages on narrower streets, to reduce the perception of bulk and enhance the pedestrian environment. Upper-level setbacks can also help relate new development to the scale of adjacent smaller buildings and historic landmark structures.
- Require or offer incentives for mid-block "corridors of space" on long blocks to prevent the uninterrupted massing of development along the entire blockfront. Massing solutions that help open up mid-block areas could also be a condition of alley vacations.

Height and Bulk Relationship

Under certain conditions, proposed height and density increases could result in situations where height limits may be too constraining to accommodate the maximum permitted density without resulting in development that appears excessively bulky. In addition to ensuring that the total floor area permitted on a site can be accommodated in desirable types of development within the established height limits, the following actions can also address this condition:

- For zones with high density limits (FAR) relative to the permitted height limit, reduce incentives for large site assembly that result in an amount of permitted floor area that is difficult to accommodate without large-floor-plate structures extending to the prescribed height limit. Options could range from:

  --denying alley vacations that enable full-block site assembly;
  --establishing a maximum lot size for development;
  --prohibiting vacated right-of-way from inclusion in lot area calculations for determining permitted floor area; or
  --establishing a variable FAR limit that allows a higher maximum FAR for development on sites of a half-block in area or less and a lower FAR for larger sites.

- Establish a density limit for residential use to treat bulk conditions more evenly among commercial-only, residential, and mixed-use developments. However, to continue to provide incentives for residential and mixed-use development, the density (FAR) limit for these projects could be slightly higher than that allowed for commercial-only development, similar to conditions in commercial zones outside of Downtown with height limits exceeding 85 feet.
- As a variation of the option above, establish density limits only for development exceeding a base height limit. The base height limit could be established as the existing mapped height limit, and for development opting to extend above this limit up to the proposed height increase, uses currently exempt from FAR calculations would be subject to a density limit.
- As an alternative to assigning a density limit to residential use, establish bulk standards for portions of a structure occupied by residential use.

Scale

Transition

- Maintain current height and density limits in sensitive transition areas.
- Establish overlays for sensitive transition areas, such as areas abutting special review districts or residential zones, to apply additional measures that address height and bulk conditions and promote a better scale relationship between areas. Increases in height could be restricted in these areas, or allowed contingent on applying special measures to address bulk conditions. These overlay areas

could also be used to target locations where special measures to limit the bulk or density of residential and mixed-use development would apply.

- Prohibit alley vacations in sensitive transition areas to prevent the larger scale of development that results from development on full-block sites through alley vacations.

Compatibility between new and existing development

The possible measures below apply to situations where greater compatibility between varying scales of development is desired, both under general development conditions and, more specifically, with landmark structures. Because of the project-specific nature of these measures, their effectiveness would be most likely achieved through the design review process. Their application may also be limited to specific areas where it is desirable to retain an existing well-established development pattern.

- Require upper-level setbacks on new structures, especially on long sides of half-blocks, even if cornice lines do not align, to create a range of building and street wall heights that is more characteristic of an established development pattern. Where no setbacks are required for new development, require the continuity of the cornice lines on facades of new towers.
- Relate the facades of new structures to the typical lot widths more characteristic of the established development pattern.
- Maintain streetwall continuity next to landmark structures to avoid exposing lot line elevations or "back sides" of historic structures.
- Avoid irregular geometry of new development below the cornice line of adjacent structures that tends to conflict with the traditional geometry and street grid relationship of historic structures.
- Locate open spaces opposite historic structures in mid-block locations, to enhance views of these structures.
- Prohibit alley vacations on blocks including landmark structures that would result in the massing of new development not conforming to the established development pattern. Current policy discourages but does not prohibit alley vacations.

Development diversity

- Prohibit alley vacations unless proposed development includes a varied mix of uses. This action may be especially appropriate in the DMC zones where there is a stronger emphasis on mixing uses than in office core zones.
- Expand the potential use of variable-scale TDR to allow sites not within the same block to qualify as eligible sending sites. To limit the use of this form of TDR, transfers between blocks could be restricted to certain areas where maintaining a varied scale is a priority.

Residential Character

- Discourage structured parking above-grade through such measures as including all—or a specified portion of—a project's accessory residential parking above-grade as chargeable FAR. For residential-only development, this would require that a density limit be established for residential use. As an alternative for residential projects, establish a standard requiring above-grade parking to be screened by another use along all or portions of the project’s street frontage.
- Require ground-level open space and landscaped areas to enhance the residential character of high-density residential development sites.

- Require base structures with residential use at street level in certain locations, such as along designated Green Streets, to promote a more residential character.
- Establish overlays for areas intended to accommodate concentrations of residential development that would include provisions to strengthen residential character, which might include some of the measures described above.

SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Additional height and bulk enabled by proposed zoning changes would add incrementally to the scale of development, resulting in greater differences from the development authorized by existing zoning. The most significant impact of these changes would occur under Alternative 1 where the greatest height and commercial density increases are proposed in areas currently zoned to provide transitions in scale and intensity of development between the Downtown commercial core and adjacent residential and mixed-use neighborhoods. Additional height and density in these areas would permit more intensive commercial development and a more abrupt change in the physical scale of development along these more sensitive zone edges.

URBAN DESIGN—PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACE

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Pedestrian Amenities and Streetscape

Within Downtown, the public realm is primarily the street environment. Individual buildings and their relationship to neighboring buildings, the street and other open spaces influence the pedestrian's perception of this environment. Factors influencing the character of the streetscape and contributing to the quality of the pedestrian experience include:

- the width of streets and sidewalks;
- the effects of sun, shadow and wind;
- topography;
- the degree of visual interest;
- the level of interaction with activity, both on the street and in abutting development;
- the bulk of buildings and how they appear to pedestrians; and
- the sense of scale, enclosure, comfort and safety.

Seattle's Downtown is organized around a street grid forming rectangular blocks. Avenues, generally the widest and most heavily traveled routes, run roughly north/south and have the most level grade, while the east/west streets are typically narrower and often have steep grades, particularly in the Commercial Core. Alleys for service access parallel the avenues, bisecting many blocks. Shifts in the orientation of the street grid at Yesler Way and Stewart Street/Olive Way, and thoroughfares cutting diagonally across the street network, such as Westlake Avenue, interrupt the uniformity of the street pattern. Along these "seams," streets converge at odd angles and create complex intersections, building forms become irregular, pedestrian flows are interrupted and use patterns and activities often change. Buildings located where streets change direction often form the backdrop of long views down the street, creating a strong sense of enclosure by visually "walling off" one area from another.

Most of the central portion of Downtown between Yesler Way and Olive Way/Stewart Street is strongly knitted together by streets that, from block to block, have strongly defined edges created by buildings built at or close to the street property line. Pedestrian access to most uses is oriented onto the wide, level avenues running north/south, while blank walls, parking garages, and vehicular and services entrances more typically occur along the steeper east/west streets. Consequently, the avenues generally provide greater pedestrian activity and visual interest. Furthermore, development directly abutting the street and orienting pedestrian access onto the street frequently provides overhead weather protection, street trees, and other features intended to enhance the pedestrian environment and increase pedestrian comfort. This more traditional pattern of development—where buildings abut the street property line and provide continuous street level uses oriented to pedestrians—is most evident west of 3rd Avenue between Pioneer Square and the Pike Place Market and in the areas surrounding the retail core.

Streetscape conditions are less cohesive in the area north of Olive Way/Stewart Street. Here, the pattern of structures with continuous streetfronts is interrupted by expanses of surface parking lots and occasional automobile-oriented development. These interruptions contribute to a less-defined pedestrian streetscape, especially in areas where blocks are occupied by parking lots.

The size of Downtown blocks and their subdivision into development sites has a strong influence on the streetscape character. In the early stages of development, buildings occupied single lots. As demand for space has increased and building technologies advanced, lots were combined to form larger project sites.

Increasingly, half-block and full-block sites (formed through alley vacations) have been created to accommodate a greater scale of development. Some blocks originally occupied by multiple, modest-scaled structures on individual lots have over time been redeveloped with a single large structure. Most of the development in the DOC 1 zone over the last 20 years has occurred on full-block sites, and several of the recently proposed projects in the DOC 2 300' zone involve full-block sites.

While the consolidation of parcels on a block into a single site allows for a greater scale of development and provides more space for a particular use, it also often reduces the variety of buildings and mix of uses in an area. The streetscape becomes less varied and often less interesting. On the other hand, because of zoning incentives and development practice, projects on larger sites often provide public open space in the form of plazas or landscaped areas which, when properly designed and sited, contribute positively to the pedestrian environment and help offset the impacts of the larger scale of development. Such spaces can have a negative effect on the pedestrian environment, however, when they are poorly integrated with street level activity and interrupt established patterns of street level use.

On sites throughout Downtown, private and public projects include features that enhance conditions for pedestrians, including public open spaces and landscaped areas; sheltered passages and street frontages that protect pedestrians from inclement weather; elevators and other mechanical assists that help pedestrians ascend steep slopes; and street-level uses that add interest and accommodate pedestrian services. In many locations, especially near the retail core, the public sidewalk area is improved with street trees, special paving, street furniture, special lighting fixtures, or public art that further contribute to the quality of the pedestrian environment.

Existing Measures Addressing Streetscape Conditions and Pedestrian Amenities

The current Downtown Land Use Code addresses the relationship between the pedestrian street environment and abutting development through the following provisions:

Street edge conditions. Required street façade heights and limits on street façade setbacks ensure that the street level portions of new projects are well-integrated with pedestrian activity and contribute to a comfortably-scaled streetscape. The specific standards vary according to anticipated pedestrian volumes on different streets and existing development conditions.

Street level uses. To promote an active street level environment, street level uses are required along certain mapped streets and encouraged in other areas. Projects including these uses are eligible for a floor area bonus and can exempt this space from the FAR density limits if certain development standards are met, such as providing overhead weather protection for pedestrians along sidewalk frontages.

Transparency requirements and blank facade limits. Development standards limit the extent of blank walls and require transparent openings at street level along street frontages to promote greater visual interest for pedestrians. The specific standards vary based on anticipated pedestrian volumes on different streets and the importance of a particular street in the overall pedestrian network.

Variable development scale. In addition to measures that specifically promote the preservation of designated landmark structures, several incentives encourage greater variety in the mix and scale of development within Downtown. These include:

- Within-block transfer of development rights (TDR) allowing the transfer of unused development rights between sites located on the same block in DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones as an incentive to retain some of the existing development on a block as redevelopment occurs.
- Exemption from upper-level development standards for small sites to facilitate development of smaller "infill" sites.

- Projects in DOC 1 and portions of DOC 2 zones can increase height up to 20% above the mapped height limits if a specified percentage of the development site is occupied by either open space or existing or new structures of limited height (no greater than 35 feet or 65 feet, depending on the percentage of the site occupied by the lower structures).

Pedestrian amenities. Several provisions promote features in new development that enhance the pedestrian environment, including requirements for street trees and minimum sidewalk widths, and floor area bonus incentives for public open space, through-block connections, hillclimb assists and Green Street improvements.

Upper level development standards. To make buildings appear less bulky to pedestrians and to address the sun, shadow and wind impacts of new development, the Code limits the extent to which the upper floors of buildings can be built close to the street. This is achieved through development standards limiting the amount of building coverage allowed within a specified area along street frontages at specified elevations. In addition, there are limits on the width of façades allowed for portions of the structure built within a specified distance from the street.

Parks and Open Space

Downtown Seattle is generally considered to have a shortage of major public parks or open spaces. However, the area does have a variety of smaller public parks and open spaces as well as privately-provided open spaces related to individual buildings, such as plazas and landscaped building setbacks. Certain streets, such as 5th Avenue and Pine Street, provide wide sidewalks, landscaping and street furniture.

Within the study area, publicly-owned open space resources are limited, and located mostly on the edges. Freeway Park, on the northeastern edge of the Commercial Core, is the largest public space (5 acres). Waterfront Park, on the western edge of the Commercial Core, is another large open space providing a heavily used amenity for tourists and locals. Other sizable public spaces include City Hall Park, the lawn of the old Federal Courthouse, and landscaped areas on the Art Museum and Benaroya Symphony Hall sites. Public open space in the DOC 2 300' and DMC zones north of Union Street is limited to the plaza located at the Convention Place Transit Tunnel Station. Additional public open space will be added in the office core upon completion of the City's Civic Center.

Small parks, plazas, and landscaped setback areas are scattered throughout the study area on private development sites, with the greatest concentration in the Commercial Core. Generally connected with major office developments, these features typically are the result of floor area bonus incentives established under earlier Downtown zoning provisions. As with publicly-owned resources, only limited amounts of this type of open space are present in the DOC 2 300' and DMC areas north of Union Street; the most prominent being the spaces provided in the Metropolitan Park complex and the sunken plaza of 1600 Pine Street (Qwest Plaza). However, several planned projects in this area include proposed open space features on site, including the new Federal Courthouse now under construction, the Touchstone project at 1000 Stewart Street and planned development at the Frederick Cadillac site.

Within the Denny Triangle and the Commercial Core neighborhoods, the combined area of public and privately owned open spaces of at least 10,000 square feet in size is approximately 19.8 acres. Most of this open space, 17.5 acres, is in the Commercial Core (see Table J-1 in Appendix J). While many of the available open spaces provide only limited recreation opportunities—primarily passive use by office workers—these spaces do introduce landscaping, light and air into the Downtown environment, and provide visual relief from the concentrations of large-scale development.

Some streets within the affected area have acquired a more open, landscaped character because of the plazas and landscaped areas sited along them. This character is especially evident on Second Avenue and University Street in the Commercial Core. Sixth Avenue in the Denny Triangle also has a more open landscaped character due to street width and numerous landscaped building setbacks on abutting sites. These setbacks accentuate Sixth Avenue's width and contribute to a sense of openness, but generally are neither large enough nor designed to function as usable open space. New open spaces in proposed projects at Sixth/Blanchard and Sixth/Bell will contribute further to this character.

Other parks nearby or adjacent to the study area include Denny Park, Regrade Park, Prefontaine Park, and harborfront recreational amenities. Denny Park is a 4.6-acre park located north of Denny Way between Dexter Avenue and 9th Avenue N, containing grassy open space, trees, landscaping, benches and play equipment. East of Denny Park is an additional open space with an outdoor basketball court and grassy field. Regrade Park is a 0.3-acre urban park with benches and limited recreational amenities. City Hall Park is a 0.7-acre open space adjacent to the King County Courthouse with benches, grass and trees. Harborfront recreational amenities include Waterfront Park, the Seattle Aquarium, the Washington Street Boat Dock, and several other tourist-oriented attractions extending as far north as Myrtle Edwards Park and the site of the future Olympic Sculpture Park. Figure 26 shows existing Downtown open spaces.

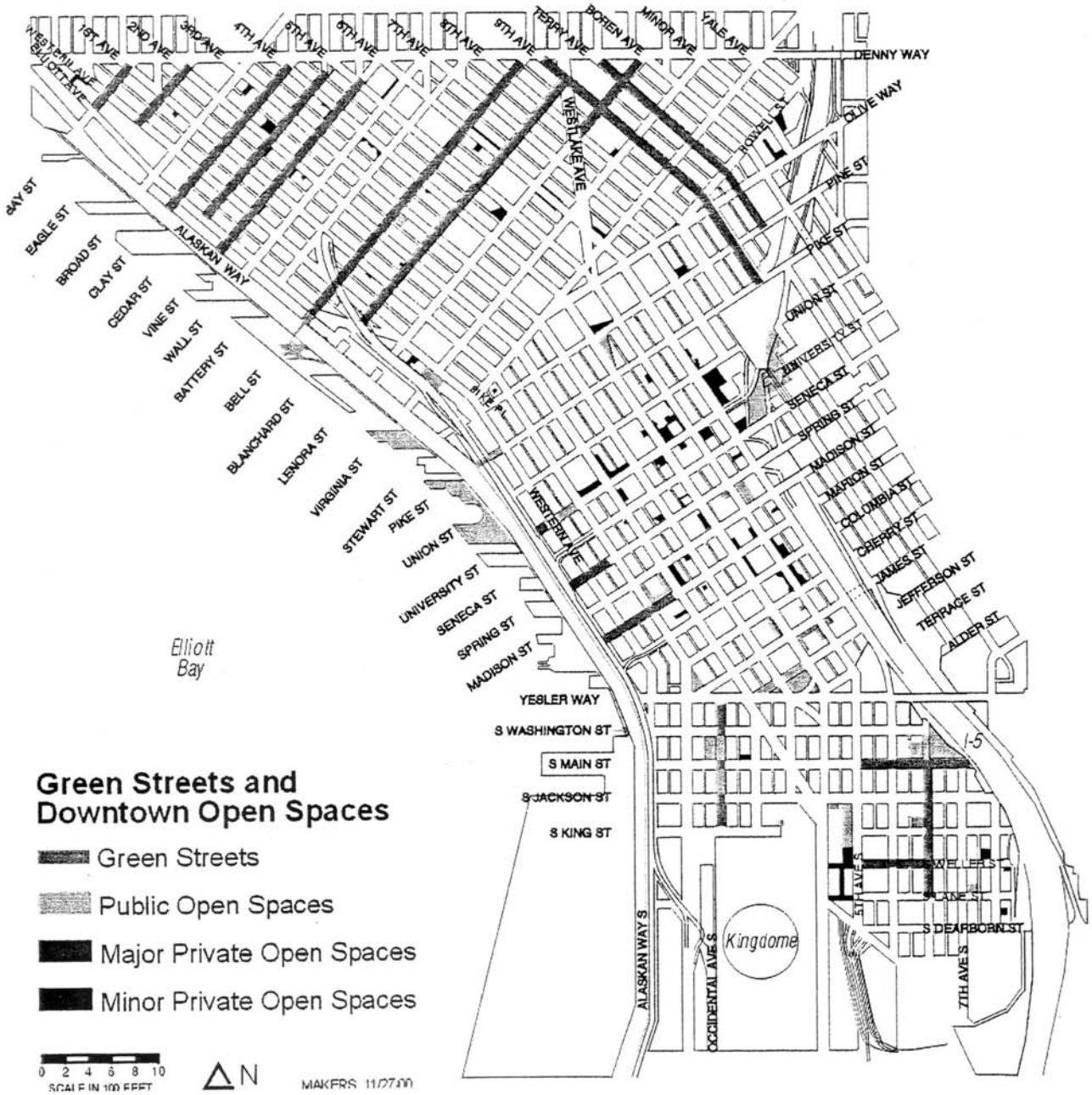
Green Streets. Due to the scarcity of open space resources Downtown and limited prospects for acquiring future open space sites, the Downtown Plan calls for a greater emphasis on landscaping and pedestrian use of certain public street rights-of-way designated as Green Streets. Several Green Streets and portions of Green Streets are located in the affected area, including Lenora Street, 9th Avenue, Terry Avenue, Blanchard and Bell Streets in the Denny Triangle, and portions of Marion, Spring and University Streets in the Commercial Core. The Harbor Steps represent one extreme design solution for Green Streets; originally an undeveloped street right-of-way, the area now is accessible only to pedestrians and used primarily as open space. However, most Green Street treatments are expected to be limited to some amount of sidewalk widening to increase pedestrian and landscaping areas while maintaining vehicular use of the street. While this type of treatment has occurred on portions of University and Spring Streets, most Green Streets remain unimproved. Design plans for the Lenora, 9th and Terry Avenue Green Streets, however, have been prepared and await implementation. In addition to improvements within the public rights-of-way, development on abutting properties is required to provide landscaped setbacks along these Green Streets. Existing designated Green Streets are shown on Figure 26 below.

Existing Measures Addressing Open Space in Affected Zones

Requirements. Office projects with floor area exceeding 85,000 square feet are required to provide open space for the use of project occupants. The amount of open space required is 20 square feet for every 1,000 square feet of office space. The open space may be for the private use of building occupants, but open space provided for general public use may be eligible for a floor area bonus.

Residential projects with more than 20 units are required to provide common recreation area in an amount equivalent to 5% of a project's total floor area in residential use. While all required area must be available for the common use of building occupants, up to 50% of the required area may be interior space. Improvements made to abutting Green Streets, or any nearby Green Street for Denny Triangle projects, may satisfy up to 50% of the requirement.

Incentives. Commercial projects in the DOC 1, DOC 2, and DMC zones in the affected area can increase permitted floor area up to specified amounts through bonuses for providing certain open space features, including plazas, parcel parks, and hillside terraces. Projects making improvements to Green Streets can



GREEN STREETS AND DOWNTOWN OPEN SPACES

FIGURE 26

Strategic Planning Office
City of Seattle
May 21, 2002

Graphic from "Downtown Open Space Evaluation" prepared by the Strategic Planning Office, April 2001.

dwntwnels\gmst_os.apr

also gain additional floor area. Gains in commercial floor area above base density limits can also be achieved through the purchase and transfer of development rights from eligible open space TDR sending sites. A preliminary inventory of potential open space sending sites estimates the supply under current conditions to be just under 1 million square feet.

Within the Denny Triangle, residential or mixed-use projects that gain additional height by participating in the transfer of development credits (TDC) program are required to provide public amenities like open space or Green Street improvements, or contribute to a fund to be used to provide such amenities in the neighborhood.

Comprehensive Plan Open Space Goals for Downtown

The Comprehensive Plan includes open space goals for Downtown neighborhoods that include goals for the overall amount of space desired for the residential and employment populations, as well as the desired proximity of the open space to the populations served.

- **Open Space Goals for the Employment Population.** The Comprehensive Plan establishes an open space goal for the Downtown core of one acre of "Village Open Space" per 10,000 jobs (4.35 sq. ft. per job). For the purposes of this analysis, the Downtown core is defined as the study area zoned DOC 1, DOC 2, and DMC, as well as the retail core (DRC).
- **Residential open space goal.** The goal for residents calls for 1 acre of village open space for each 1,000 households.
- **Open space distribution goal.** The open space goals for both the residential and employment populations include distribution goals. Regardless of the overall amount of open space, all locations need to be within 1/8 mile of Village Open Space.

"Village Open Space" is generally described as public open space in the ¼ acre to ½ acre range (approximately 10,000 to 21,000 square feet). The Plan is not specific about the characteristics of village open space. It is possible that some non-City public space and some privately developed, bonused public spaces would qualify. However, the goals do call for at least one usable open space of at least one acre in size, a "Village Commons," for each urban center village with a growth target exceeding 2,500 households.

The Comprehensive Plan does not specify whether the same open space can be counted towards meeting both the residential and employment open space goals. While the open space/recreational needs are likely to be different, it is reasonable to assume that there will be some overlap in the use of space by both populations. However, the extent to which this overlap can successfully meet the needs of both residents and workers will largely be a factor of design, location and programmed use.

Table 30 shows the study area's current status in terms of meeting open space goals. The existing conditions are well within the open space goals for employment and residential populations, but the goal for distribution of open space is not addressed in Table 30. Additional open space would need to be provided in some areas in order to meet the distribution goal.

Table 30
Open Space Goal Status—Existing Conditions

	Commercial Core Area: 276 acres	Edge of Belltown Area: 38 acres	Denny Triangle Area: 143 acres	Total Area: 457 acres
Amount of open space*	17.5 acres	0 acres	2.3 acres**	19.8 acres
Employment population	107,705 jobs	7,221 jobs	19,340 jobs	134,226 jobs
Jobs/acre of open space	6,155 jobs/acre of open space	0 open space	8,409 jobs/acre of open space	6,779 jobs/acre of open space
Housing Units	2,280 units	997 units	927 units	4,204 units
Housing units/ acre of open space	126 units/acre of open space	0 open space	403 units/acre of open space	212 units/acre of open space

*Includes committed projects like City Hall Plaza and Federal Courthouse Plaza
**Does not include Denny Park, a 4.6-acre open space abutting the northwest corner of the neighborhood.

IMPACTS

Alternative 1 – High End Height and Density Increase

STREETSCAPE AND PEDESTRIAN AMENITY

Impacts on the streetscape and pedestrian environment are expected to be similar for all of the alternatives. General impacts for specific areas are described below:

Denny Triangle

Under all alternatives, the greatest impacts on the streetscape and pedestrian environment are anticipated in the Denny Triangle due to the concentration of future development predicted to occur there, particularly in the DOC 2 zone and portions of abutting DMC zones. To the extent that Alternative 1 allows the greatest height and density of development, these impacts would be slightly more pronounced under this alternative.

Positive Impacts

- **Narrow sidewalks widened.** As new development occurs, sidewalks currently too narrow to meet minimum standards will be widened to accommodate increased pedestrian volumes.
- **Additional street trees provided.** New development will also be required to provide street trees along many of the streets in the Denny Triangle currently lacking this amenity.
- **Green Street improvements provided.** With the large number of redevelopment sites abutting Green Streets in the area, developers are likely to implement Green Street improvements.
- **Continuous street-level uses promoted along several streets.** Requirements and incentives for street-level uses will promote continuous street-level uses along Westlake Avenue, Stewart Street, Olive Way, Pine Street and many of the avenues in the area east of Westlake.

Adverse Impacts

- **Above-grade parking could separate occupied floors from the street, deadening the atmosphere of the street environment.** While this is likely to occur in all alternatives, the

increase in height in Alternative 1 throughout the area may further encourage providing structured parking above-grade.

- **Low level of streetscape amenity in Denny Triangle west of Westlake Avenue.** Development in the Denny Triangle area west of Westlake Avenue is not required to provide street level uses on any of the streets, which could result in very limited street level activity in what is likely to emerge as a high-density office district. Westlake Avenue on the eastern edge of this area is the only designated Class I Pedestrian Street, so development on most streets would be subject to minimal standards for façade transparency and blank wall limits. The lack of an existing development context in this area means that its future character will primarily be established by new development over the next 20 years—mostly large-scale high-rise projects. This could result in streetscapes with less variety and interest than would be expected to occur in an area that developed incrementally over an extended period of time, or where more substantial older development remained as part of the development mix.
- **Greater sense of "enclosure" within several streets.** The larger scale of development will create a stronger sense of enclosure within several streets. However, this will be relieved somewhat in the area along Westlake Avenue and to the west, where the street environment should retain a somewhat more open character because of the wider streets and the additional right-of-way area introduced by Westlake Avenue cutting across the street grid. This openness could be reinforced by the lower scale of development likely to remain on the irregular small parcels created by Westlake Avenue's swath across the grid.

Belltown Edge

Potential redevelopment sites are generally less than a half-block in size, so future projects will likely occur as "infill" mixed with existing development. Based on development trends and the presence of amenities attractive to housing, a cluster of residential and mixed-use development is predicted to occur in this area, particularly along 2nd Avenue. Because residential use is not subject to a density limit, and residential bulk limits are minimal, these structures have the potential to be quite bulky and larger in scale than existing development in this transition area. For example, the Cristilla residential high-rise now under construction has above-grade floor area equivalent to 19.2 FAR in a zone that limits commercial use to 7 FAR.

Positive Impacts

- **Improved pedestrian facilities.** Since the north/south Avenues in this portion of Belltown are all designated Class I Pedestrian Streets, and street level uses are required along several street frontages, future projects will likely contribute to an active pedestrian environment at street level, strengthening pedestrian connections between Belltown and the Commercial Core.

Adverse Impacts

- **Above-grade parking levels could detract from streetscape character.** Projects that include parking on the lower floors of structures may be less compatible with existing development and detract from the streetscape character.
- **Loss of open character on some east/west streets.** Some east/west streets west of 2nd Avenue provide views out to Elliott Bay. As larger structures built to the street edge replace existing, lower development, the scope of view down these streets will narrow, diminishing the current "open" character.

Commercial Core

In the DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones of the office core, future development would be dispersed and include commercial as well as public projects.

Positive Impacts

- **Improved pedestrian facilities.** Given Pedestrian Street designations and requirements for street level uses, new development is expected to contribute to an integrated, active streetscape. Development on vacant land abutting 5th Avenue near Yesler Way will also likely strengthen pedestrian connections between this part of the office core and the International District to the south.
- **Existing setback requirements will aid in scale and bulk control.** Along the western edge of the office core, upper level setback requirements along view corridors will help maintain a pedestrian scale and offset the bulky presence of towers by requiring lower heights for portions of the structure abutting these view streets.
- **New public open space in developments should benefit pedestrians.** Several projects are likely to include some amount of public open space, especially public projects, which should provide pedestrians with some relief from the overall intensity of development in the area. Projects that opt to incorporate hillside terraces or hillclimb assists on-site should enhance pedestrian circulation in steeply sloping areas.

Adverse Impacts

- **Possible loss of older structures may diminish variety and pedestrian orientation at street level.** Larger projects are expected to replace many remaining, smaller-scale structures over time. These older, smaller-scale structures often add architectural interest and diversity, and tend to have a stronger pedestrian orientation at street level. Their loss would likely result in less variety and interest in the streetscape.

First Avenue/Western Avenue Vicinity

A limited number of development projects would be scattered in the western edge of the Commercial Core between the DOC 1 zone and the Harborfront.

Positive Impacts

- **Existing setback requirements will aid in scale and bulk control.** While taller structures would be permitted, the required upper level setbacks along view corridors should promote a relationship with the pedestrian environment that is similar existing development in the area.
- **Infill development would fill in gaps in the streetscape.** As development on "infill" sites currently occupied by surface parking lots, these projects should fill in the gaps in the existing streetscape.

Adverse Impacts

- **Non-requirement of street level uses.** Due to no requirements for street level uses along Western Avenue, there could be interruptions in the continuity of street level activity.
- **Above-grade parking levels could detract from streetscape character.** Parking on the lower above-grade floors of a structure could detract from the character of the streetscape.

OPEN SPACE IMPACTS

Future development under any alternative will result in increases to Downtown employment and residential populations, creating more demand for the use of existing open space resources. Through zoning requirements and incentives, as well as common development practices, some of this demand will be met by development providing required open space to meet the needs of building occupants, as well as public open space to help augment existing public open space resources.

Several public projects, including the new City Hall, Federal Courthouse and Convention Place TOD site, will contribute to the supply of available open space within the study area. These and a few other private development projects underway or in planning stages may provide approximately 3 acres of open space.

Potential Public Open Space Added Through Development Incentives (Floor Area Bonuses and TDR)

Developers can increase project floor area through bonuses for providing open space amenities on the development site, or under recently-adopted transfer of development rights (TDR) provisions. The Downtown Land Use Code limits the amount of floor area that can be gained through these options. Future projects will likely use some combination of open space bonuses and other bonus options to obtain additional floor area.

Table 31 describes the maximum amount of on-site open space that could be gained through development projected to 2020, along with an adjusted estimate based on review of the development sites. Alternative 1 would likely generate approximately 1.7 acres of on-site open space, the least of any alternative, due to the combination of fewer but larger developments than the other alternatives. On-site open spaces would tend to be placed in fewer developments and/or be smaller in size, and would not be *required* features. Under Alternative 4, the amount of on-site open space would be greater, partly because the lower density limits require more development sites to accommodate projected growth, increasing the opportunities for on-site open space. Also, Alternative 4 includes recently adopted provisions that require open space in order to reach the highest height allowed. Tables J-3 and J-4 in Appendix J provide more details about these open space calculations.

Table 31
Potential Supply of Public Open Space Added Through Use of Floor Area Bonuses

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Best-case maximum using floor area bonus for on-site open space	5.3 acres	6.3 acres	9.7 acres	11.2 acres
Predicted amount of on-site open space developed in future projects	1.7 acres	1.9 acres	1.9 acres	2.9 acres

Source: SPO, 2002

Use of Open Space Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). Another incentive for increasing the supply of public open space Downtown is Open Space TDR. Under this approach, developers need not provide the open space on their project site, but instead acquire development rights from public open space sites at another location and "transfer" them to their site to increase floor area. The potential supply of open space TDR under the various alternatives is estimated to range from approximately 1 to 1.3 million square feet. This is available or possibly available from sites including the Olympic Sculpture Park site, the Civic Center sites, Westlake Circle and Olive/Howell Triangle sites. (Table J-5 in Appendix J estimates the available supply of open space TDR from potential sending sites.)

The idealized maximum amount of open space TDR that could be used by future development under Alternative 1 is approximately 1.2 million square feet. However, given the range of bonus and TDR options available to gain floor area, this maximum amount is not likely to occur, and the potential supply of Open Space TDR is likely to exceed demand in all alternatives. Proposed increases in base FAR in Alternative 1 will increase the supply of available TDR from eligible open space sending sites.

Open Space Requirements

As described in Affected Environment, Downtown development is subject to requirements for open space or common recreation area according to use. Hotel and retail uses are not subject to any type of open space requirement.

Office Open Space Requirement. Under the office development requirement, 20 square feet of open space is required for every 1,000 square feet of office space in a project. Table 32 below indicates the total amount of open space that projected office development over the next 20 years would be required to provide under the four alternatives.

Table 32
Required Open Space for Office Development Added Between 2000 and 2020

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Total square feet of office space	17,175,036	16,864,155	16,923,900	17,002,603
Total amount of open space required	343,501 sf (7.9 acres)	337,283 (7.7 acres)	338,478 sf (7.8 acres)	340,052 sf (7.8 acres)

Source: SPO, 2002

Since the projected amount of office development is essentially the same for all alternatives, there is no significant difference between the alternatives in terms of the amount of open space required.

Common recreation area requirement for residential use. In projects with over 20 dwelling units, residential use is subject to a common recreation area requirement. The amount of area required is calculated as 5 percent of the project's total gross floor area in residential use. Up to 50% of the required common recreation area may be provided as enclosed space, and on sites abutting a Green Street, up to 50% of the common recreation requirement may be met through participation in Green Street improvements.

Within the Denny Triangle, residential floor area gained through the TDC program is exempt from the common recreation area requirement. Developers can contribute instead to an amenity credit fund used to provide public open space and Green Street improvements in that neighborhood.

Table 33 below indicates the total amount of common recreation area that projected residential development over the next 20 years would be required to provide under the four alternatives. Alternatives 1 and 2 would result in the greatest amount of common recreation area provided in future residential projects because of the amount of residential floor area exempted from the requirement in Alternatives 3 and 4, where use of TDC is greatest.

Table 33
Required Common Recreation Area for Residential Use

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2*	Alternative 3*	Alternative 4*
Total square feet of residential floor area	6.3 million sf (7,378 units)	6.5 million sf (7,636 units)	6.3 million sf (7,454 units)	6.5 million sf (7,625 units)
Total amount of common recreation area required	313,565 sf (7.2 acres)	312,885 sf (7.2 acres)	281,732 sf (6.5 acres)	281,520 sf (6.5 acres)

*Floor area gained through TDC exempt from common recreation area requirement

Contributions to Amenity Credit Fund under the Denny Triangle TDC Program

Under Alternative 1, the proposed height increases are assumed to terminate the use of TDC as an incentive program because development would be permitted greater height limits outright.

Comprehensive Plan Open Space Goals for Downtown

Because of the distribution of projected growth under the four alternatives, it is most instructive to discuss potential impacts by Downtown neighborhood.

Denny Triangle

The Denny Triangle Urban Center Village is expected to receive over 60% of the total employment growth and over 70% of the total residential growth projected for the study area. With current projects and anticipated development over 20 years, available open space in the Denny Triangle area would total approximately 5 acres. This amount is approximately the same across the alternatives, except for slightly less open space projected for Alternative 3 and slightly more for Alternative 4. This amount does not account for any potential future public investments in open space. (Table J-11 in Appendix J provides more details about these calculations.)

Employment Goal. With existing and projected open space totaling 5 acres, the Denny Triangle area would fall short of the 1 acre of open space per 10,000 jobs goal, with 1 acre per about 12,000 jobs. If no additional open space is provided, the Denny Triangle area would fall far short of the open space goal, with about 1 acre per 25,000 jobs.

Residential Goal. With projected residential growth and a total of 5 acres of open space, the Denny Triangle area would fall short of the 1 acre of open space per 1,000 households goal, with 1 acre per about 1,200 households. If no additional open space is provided, the Denny Triangle would fall far short of the open space goal, providing less than half of the open space needed to meet the goal.

In all the alternatives, the mixing of high-density housing with employment activity in the same area may make it difficult to obtain large open spaces usable to residents. The greatest concentration of future housing is likely to occur in the portion of the Denny Triangle neighborhood east of Westlake Avenue, where Green Street improvements, improved access to Denny Park, and potential open space improvements on the Convention Place Transit Station site may help serve the future residential population.

Distribution Goal. A large portion of the Denny Triangle is currently not served by an open space within a 1/8-mile radius. The distribution of projected open space in future development is likely to accomplish the desired distribution goal. However, most of this additional open space would be more oriented to serving employee open space needs than residential needs.

Village Commons. At approximately one acre, the plaza of the new Federal Courthouse is the largest open space currently planned in the area, but its use is likely to be restricted. An open space as large as one acre is unlikely to occur as part of a private development, so unless there is significant public investment, the area is not likely to acquire an open space serving this function.

Commercial Core

With current projects and anticipated development over 20 years, available open space in the Commercial Core would total approximately 18.6 acres. This amount is the same across the alternatives. This amount does not account for any potential future public investments in open space. (Table J-12 in Appendix J provides more details about these calculations.)

Employment Goal. With existing and projected open space, the Commercial Core would exceed the 1 acre of open space per 10,000 jobs goal, with approximately 1 acre per 7,000 jobs. The peripherally-located Waterfront Park and Freeway Park account for a large portion of this open space.

Residential Goal. With projected residential growth and open space, the Commercial Core would far exceed the 1 acre of open space per 1,000 households goal, with 1 acre per about 150 households.

Distribution Goal. Most of the Commercial Core between Union and James Streets and 1st and 5th Avenues currently lacks open space and would likely need about three sites totaling about 3/4-acre of space to meet the distribution goal. Planned open space on the City Hall and Public Safety Building sites and additional spaces on private development sites will likely accomplish the desired distribution.

Housing in the Commercial Core is concentrated along the southern edge adjacent to Pioneer Square and along the western edge, primarily in and around the Pike Place Market, along 1st Avenue, and along 2nd Avenue adjacent to the retail core. Future residential development is likely to continue to locate in these areas, which have reasonably good access to the open space resources along the harborfront. Since tourists and the Downtown working population also heavily use these open spaces, additional spaces that more directly serve the needs of the residential population may also be desirable.

Village Commons. Although not quite one acre in size, Westlake Park and Plaza in the retail core already serve as the Commercial Core's "Village Commons."

Green Street Improvements Associated with Future Development

The substantial amount of development expected in the Commercial Core and Denny Triangle provides opportunities for carrying out Green Street improvements on development sites abutting designated Green Streets.

Proposed/Probable Green Street Improvements. The following is a list of proposed Green Street projects already being undertaken by the City or expected to occur as a result of planned private development on an abutting site:

- Terry Avenue TDC Green Street demonstration project: Terry Avenue between Lenora and Virginia Streets (Denny Triangle);
- 2119 6th Avenue (UA Cinema site): portions of Blanchard Street between 5th and 6th Avenues (Denny Triangle);
- 2300 5th Avenue: Bell Street between 5th and 6th Avenues (Denny Triangle).

Potential Green Street Improvements. Table 34 below identifies how many projected future development sites would abut designated Green Streets under the four alternatives. Many or most of these future development projects would take advantage of available development incentives for Green Street improvements. The difference among the alternatives would occur only in the vicinity of 7th and 8th Avenues between Blanchard and Lenora Streets.

Table 34
Number of Assumed Future Development Sites Abutting Green Streets

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Number of Assumed Development Sites	10	10	11	14

Source: SPO, 2002

Alternative 2 - Concentrated Office Core

STREETSCAPE AND PEDESTRIAN AMENITY

Conditions under Alternative 2 would be very similar to Alternative 1. The biggest distinctions would likely be within DMC zones of the Denny Triangle, Belltown and the western edge of the Commercial Core, where development would not be as tall and dense as allowed under Alternative 1. However, even in these areas, streetscape conditions as perceived by pedestrians would not be significantly different than would occur under Alternative 1.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Alternative 2 is relatively similar to Alternative 1 in terms of open space impacts.

Potential Public Open Space Added Through Development Incentives

Use of Open Space Floor Area Bonuses. Under the scenarios used to depict potential future development in this analysis, Alternative 2 shows only slightly more open space provided on development sites than Alternative 1 (1.9 acres versus 1.7 acres).

Use of Open Space Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). Because there are no increases in the base FAR under this alternative, the potential supply of open space TDR is the same as under existing conditions. However, increased maximum density limits in DOC 1 and DOC 2 zones create the potential for more demand for open space TDR, similar to that in Alternative 1.

Open Space Requirements

Office Open Space Requirement. The projected amount of office development is essentially the same for all alternatives. Consequently, there is no significant difference between alternatives in terms of the amount of open space required.

Common Recreation Area Requirement for Residential Use. The amount of common recreation area required for residential use in Alternative 2 is similar to Alternative 1.

Contributions to Amenity Credit Fund under Denny Triangle TDC Program

Alternative 2 results in a substantial reduction of the area where the TDC program applies. In Alternative 2, additional heights in the DMC zones of the Denny Triangle still could only be gained through participation in the TDC program. The proposed height increase in the DOC 2 zone of the Denny Triangle under this alternative is assumed to terminate the use of TDC as an incentive in this zone since development would be permitted the greater height outright. Compared to Alternatives 3 and 4, Alternative 2 would generate the least contribution to the amenity credit fund, due to the reduced area where the TDC program would apply (see Table 35).

Table 35
Contributions to Amenity Credit Fund through Participation in TDC Program

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3	Alternative 4
Total square feet of residential floor area gained though TDC	NA	232,900 sf (274 units)	701,250 sf (825 units)	850,850 sf sf (1,001 units)
Contribution to amenity credit fund at current rate of $5/sq.ft.	NA	$1,164,500	$3,506,250	$4,254,250

Source: SPO, 2002

Comprehensive Plan Open Space Goals for Downtown

Alternative 2's relationship to these goals is similar to that of Alternative 1.

Green Street Improvements Associated with Future Development

Potential Green Street Improvements. Alternative 2's relationship to Green Streets improvements is essentially the same as that of Alternative 1, with 10 future development sites located adjacent to Green Streets.

Alternative 3 – Residential Emphasis

STREETSCAPE AND PEDESTRIAN AMENITY

Streetscape conditions in Alternative 3 would be similar to the other alternatives. The biggest distinction would be in areas reclassified to a more residential-oriented designation, including the southern edge of Belltown and north central edge of the Denny Triangle. Standards dictating less bulky towers and greater spacing between towers would likely promote more positive conditions within the street environment, including greater solar access relative to the bulkier development allowed under the other alternatives, and a perception of greater openness. Alternative 3 would also maintain existing height and density limits in the portions of the DOC 2 zone in the Denny Triangle with narrower street widths. To the extent that Alternative 3 includes more projects on the periphery of the office core than Alternatives 1 and 2, some additional areas will benefit from streetscape improvements required of new development.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Potential Public Open Space Added Through Development Incentives

Use of Open Space Floor Area Bonuses. Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 would result in similar amounts of open space provided on-site. In Alternative 3, residential development in residentially zoned areas is one factor that would limit the amount of open space provided. Since housing is not subject to density limits and there is no requirement for public open space, there is no direct incentive to provide publicly accessible open space on a residential development site.

Use of Open Space Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). Because there are no increases in the base FAR under Alternative 3, the potential supply of open space TDR would be the same as under existing conditions. However, increases to maximum density limits in DOC 1 and most DOC 2 zones, and the ability for development in areas redesignated DMR/C to use open space TDR for all floor area gained above the base FAR, would increase the amount of open space TDR future projects could use relative to Alternatives 1 and 2.

Open Space Requirements

Office Open Space Requirement. Because the amount of projected office development is essentially the same for all alternatives, there is no significant difference in the amount of open space required.

Common Recreation Area Requirement for Residential Use. Alternatives 3 and 4 would result in lower amounts of required common recreation area because use of the TDC program in these alternatives would allow projects to exempt this requirement in exchange for contributions to the Denny Triangle Amenity Credit Fund. Consequently, open space that would otherwise be provided as common recreation area in individual projects would be provided as public open space funded through TDC amenity credits.

Contributions to Amenity Credit Fund under Denny Triangle TDC Program

Alternative 3 will result in some reduction in the area where the TDC program applies. In Alternative 3, additional heights in the DMC zones and portions of the DOC 2 zone of the Denny Triangle still could only be gained through participation in the TDC program. The proposed height increase in the central portion of the DOC 2 zone under this Alternative is assumed to terminate the use of TDC as an incentive in this area, since development would be permitted the greater height outright. However, due to projects in DMC zones, Alternative 3 would generate contributions of approximately $3.5 million to the Amenity Credit Fund, which is approximately $2.3 million more than would be generated under Alternative 2 (no such funds would be generated under Alternative 1).

Comprehensive Plan Open Space Goals for Downtown

Alternative 3's relationship to these goals is nearly the same as Alternative 1. However, Alternative 3 proposes zoning changes to concentrate residential development in a northern portion of the Denny Triangle. This could provide a better opportunity to achieve a residentially-oriented open space amenity.

Green Street Improvements Associated with Future Development

Potential Green Street Improvements. Under Alternative 3, approximately 11 future development sites would be adjacent to Green Streets and could implement such improvements, one more site than identified for Alternative 1. Alternative 3's zoning changes along 9th and Terry Avenues could encourage the "residential enclave" called for by the Denny Triangle Neighborhood Plan, more so than the other EIS alternatives.

Alternative 4 – No Action

STREETSCAPE AND PEDESTRIAN AMENITY

Alternative 4's streetscape/pedestrian impacts would be similar to those described for Alternative 1. To accommodate the same amount of growth, more properties would need to be redeveloped under Alternative 4 than Alternative 1. This would provide the opportunity to achieve street-level improvements along several more properties than under Alternative 1, as well as the potential for adverse impacts as identified in the Alternative 1 discussion. The larger number of redeveloped properties could also result in more on-site open space and Green Street improvements, which could help enhance the overall quality of the street level environment.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Potential Public Open Space Added Through Development Incentives

Use of Open Space Floor Area Bonuses. Alternative 4 may result in the greatest amount of on-site public open space provided by future development—approximately 4.4 acres, or 1 more acre than predicted for Alternative 1. This is due to the larger number of properties predicted to redevelop under Alternative 4, providing more opportunities for on-site open space. Lower development densities could mean that open space would be more easily incorporated into site plans, especially in DMC zones. This is consistent with observations of current projects being planned under existing conditions, which include substantial areas of open space (2300 5th Avenue, Stewart Place).

Use of Open Space Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). Alternative 4 would allow for the greatest use of open space TDR, due to the range of opportunities in the current Land Use Code to use open space TDR, particularly in DMC areas. The potential supply of open space TDR is less for Alternative 4 than estimated for Alternative 1.

Open Space Requirements

Office Open Space Requirement. No significant difference between alternatives in the amount of open space required.

Common Recreation Area Requirement for Residential Use. Alternative 4 would result in approximately 6.5 acres of required common recreation area, about 10 percent less than would occur under Alternative 1. However, if the TDC program is used, other public on-site open space may be provided instead of this common recreation area.

Contributions to Amenity Credit Fund under Denny Triangle TDC Program

With the continued functioning of the TDC program, Alternative 4 would result in the greatest overall level of contribution to the Denny Triangle Amenity Credit Fund—an estimated $4.2 million. This would be approximately $3.1 million more than would be generated under Alternative 2 and $750,000 more than would be generated under Alternative 3 (no such funds would be generated under Alternative 1).

Comprehensive Plan Open Space Goals for Downtown

Given that the amount of additional open space predicted under Alternative 4 is similar to Alternative 1, Alternative 4's relationship to Comprehensive Plan open space goals would be similar to Alternative 1. However, due to the predicted redevelopment of more properties under Alternative 4, the distribution of open space on development sites could be slightly more widespread in the Denny Triangle than under Alternative 1, and therefore more consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Green Street Improvements Associated with Future Development

Potential Green Street Improvements. Due to an additional four sites predicted for redevelopment in the Blanchard/Lenora/7th/8th Avenue vicinity, Alternative 4 may result in a few more improved Green Street frontages than the other alternatives. Also, assuming the TDC program is functioning, additional resources generated through the TDC amenity fund could be available for Green Street improvements within the Denny Triangle.

Impact Summary Table

Table 36 summarizes the findings of the Pedestrian Amenities and Open Space impacts section, for the convenience of the reader.

Table 36
Summary of Open Space Impacts

	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4
Ped. Amenities & Streetscape				
Positive Impacts	• Narrow sidewalks would be widened. • Additional street trees would be provided. • Green Street improvements would be provided. • Continuous street level uses would be promoted along several streets, aided by infill development over time. • New public open spaces in developments should benefit pedestrians.	Similar to Alt. 1. Even in areas with retained zoning (in DMC zones), the streetscape conditions as perceived by pedestrians would not be much different than would occur under Alt. 1.	Similar to Alt. 1, except greater chance for positive street environment in the residential-zoned areas, due to lower bulk limits. Lack of zone changes in some DOC 2 areas would avoid some streetscape effects related to greater building bulk.	Same amount of growth would be accommodated on more properties than under Alt. 1, providing more opportunities for streetscape improvements, including Green Streets.
Adverse Impacts	• Above-grade parking could detract from street-level character. • In some areas, non-requirement of street level uses could limit street level activity in buildings. • There would be a greater sense of "enclosure" within several streets. • In some areas, possible loss of older structures may diminish variety and pedestrian orientation at street level.	Similar types of impacts as under Alt. 1. However, lack of zone changes in DMC areas would mean buildings less dense and lower in height in these areas than under Alt. 1.	Similar types of impacts as under Alternative 1, but somewhat less potential for impacts, due to residential-oriented zoning changes in some areas, and lack of change in some DOC 2 areas.	Same amount of growth on more properties than under Alt. 1 would have additional risk of adverse impacts occurring along some streets, as listed under Alt. 1.
Parks & Open Space				
Predicted on-site open space developed in future projects	1.7 acres	1.9 acres	1.9 acres	2.9 acres
Use of open space TDR	The potential supply of open space TDR is approx. 1.0-1.3 million sq.ft. Demand is not expected to exceed supply.	Supply would remain the same. Changes in DOC zones would increase demand similar to Alt. 1.	Similar to Alt. 1 and 2, but areas rezoned to DMR/C would allow slight increase in use of open space TDRs.	Supply would be less than under Alt. 1, but Alt. 4 would allow for the greatest use of open space TDR among the alts.

	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4
Open space required for office uses	7.9 acres	7.7 acres	7.8 acres	7.8 acres
Common rec. area open space required for residential uses	7.2 acres	7.2 acres	6.5 acres	6.5 acres
Predicted Contri-butions to TDC Amenity Credit Fund	None, since Alt. 1 would likely terminate the use of the TDC program.	Est. $1.2 million	Est. $3.5 million	Est. $4.3 million
Relationship to Open Space Goals				
Denny Triangle	Even with predicted open space in future developments, this area would fall a bit short of meeting the residential and employee-oriented open space goals. How-ever, Alt. 1 would likely meet the distribution goal.	Similar to Alt. 1	Nearly the same as Alt. 1, except residential-zoned area could promote more residentially-oriented open space.	Slightly more open space in Denny Triangle, possibly spread over more area than Alt. 1.
Commercial Core	Would meet or exceed the residential and employee-oriented open space goals, and would likely meet the distribution goals.	Similar to Alt. 1	Similar to Alt. 1.	Similar to Alt. 1.
Number of future development sites adjacent to Green Sts.	10 sites	10 sites	11 sites	14 sites

MITIGATION STRATEGIES

REQUIRED/PROPOSED MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Given the type and magnitude of impacts discussed in this section, no mitigation measures or strategies are required or proposed to be mandatory actions accompanying approval of any of the alternatives.

OTHER POSSIBLE MITIGATION STRATEGIES

The following potential mitigation measures have been identified for consideration.

Streetscape and Pedestrian Amenity

- Where the long blocks of the Denny Triangle are assembled for redevelopment through alley vacations, encourage mid-block connections between north/south avenues to enhance pedestrian circulation and promote better streetscape conditions along the long dimensions of the block.
- Review the network of pedestrian street classifications and mapped streets requiring street-level uses to determine if they are consistent with anticipated development activity and emerging development patterns. Propose necessary adjustments to reinforce desired conditions.
- Examine how streetscape conditions can best accommodate the increase in high density mixed-use development anticipated in areas initially intended primarily for high-density office use.

- Designate streets of special significance or character for enhancement through coordinated public and private actions, including public improvements to the pedestrian environment, integrated public open space improvements and development standards for abutting properties, such as setbacks and street façade treatments, that ensure new projects reinforce the special character desired.

Parks and Open Space

General

- Explore mechanisms for pooling resources for open space improvements (payment in-lieu, voluntary payment option similar to the program recently established for floor area bonuses through payment to an affordable housing and childcare fund) to fund public spaces sited and designed to more directly meet specific open space needs of Downtown residents.
- Investigate measures for addressing the additional demand generated by employment growth and increased tourism on Downtown public open space resources.
- Consider measures that may apply to market-rate residential development to address demand generated by increased residential population on public open space resources.

Denny Triangle

- Prioritize public investment in open space to enhance the livability of this emerging high-density urban neighborhood where existing open space resources are very limited.
- Investigate alternative strategies for maintaining a viable Transfer of Development Credit program in the Denny Triangle in situations where substantial height increases are proposed.
- Modify standards and guidelines for bonused open space to promote features better suited to the needs of a residential population.

Commercial Core

With limited future opportunities for siting open space, efforts in the Commercial Core neighborhood could be focused on improvements that would both introduce limited amounts of open space in the area while improving pedestrian connections to the neighborhood's major open space resources along the Harborfront. Improvements along University Street provide one potential model. Here, University Street is lined with hillside terraces for two blocks along the frontages of Benaroya Hall and the Art Museum, and the steps of the Harbor Steps project further extend this linear stretch of open space for a total of three and a half blocks. Setbacks accommodate landscaping and pedestrian amenities while enhancing vistas to the water and linking the harborfront with the edge of the financial district. Improvements on other east/west streets could be coordinated to create similar linear open space connections between areas of concentrated employment and the open space resources along the Harborfront.

SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Streetscape and Pedestrian Amenity

Under all the alternatives, future development will reduce solar access to the pedestrian environment and increase the physical enclosure of the street level environment.

Parks and Open Space

Under all the alternatives, the per capita amount of public open space available for use by Downtown residents and employees will diminish.